

TNU F WEHRMACHTA

Konstantin BYKOV

SOLDIER @]1) REICH

Konstantin Bykov

THE LAST TRIUMPH OF THE WEHRMACHT

Kharkov "cauldron"

Moscow "YAUZA-PRESS" 2009

UDC 355/359 DE

Ye mi,

BBK 63.3(0) 62 "ee 2)

B95

Design of P. Volkov's series

Second edition

Previously, the book was published under the title "Kharkov" cauldron "1942"

B 95

Bykov K.V.

The Last Triumph of the Wehrmacht: the Kharkov "cauldron" / Konstantin Bykov. - M. : Yauza-press, 2009. - 480 p. - (Soldier of the Third Reich).

T5VM 978-5-9955-0064-3

More than 170 thousand dead and prisoners, 27 divisions of 15 tank brigades destroyed, the collapse of the entire Southwestern Front and the German breakthrough to Stalingrad and the Caucasus - this is the terrible result of the Kharkov disaster of 1942, one of the greatest defeats of the Red Army and the last triumph of the Wehrmacht .

How could this happen? Why did the successfully launched Soviet offensive end in a monstrous defeat and colossal losses? Why, according to Stalin, did the Red Army "lose an operation that was half won"? How did the Wehrmacht manage to turn the tide of the Battle of Kharkov in their favor? Based primarily on German operational documents and presenting for the first time a German perspective, this book provides answers to many of these questions.

According to the author, the Kharkov "cauldron" became "the most unjustified, most offensive defeat of the Red Army in the entire history of the Great Patriotic War. However, this was the last battle for

encirclement won by our enemies." UDC 355/359 BBK 63.3(0) 62

©K. V. Bykov, 2009

15bm 978-5-9955-0064-3 © Yauza-press LLC, 2009

Foreword

On May 12, 1942, the armies of the South-Western direction, led by S. Timoshenko, I. Bagramyan and N. Khrushchev, with the support of a large number of tanks, aviation and artillery, went on the offensive. Having quickly broken through the German front, they rushed to Kharkov.

On May 29 everything was finished. "Within three weeks, the Southwestern Front, thanks to its frivolity, not only lost the Kharkov operation, which was half won, but managed to give the enemy 18-20 divisions ... If we informed the country in the whole fullness about the catastrophe! that the front has experienced and continues to experience, then I am afraid that you would have been treated very coolly, "I. Stalin said to the leaders of the South-Western direction, not yet knowing that the defeat near Kharkov would lead to a breakthrough of the Germans to the Volga and the Caucasus.

"Preparation" for the Kharkov catastrophe began in January 1942 and consisted of the following key points:

1. On January 18, the Kharkov offensive strategic operation began, which ended at the end of January with the fact that the Soviet troops were in a semi-encirclement in the area

! In other words, Stalin refutes the Sovinformburo report of May 31, which reported that "our troops in these battles lost up to 5 thousand people killed, 70 thousand people missing, 300 tanks, 832 guns and 124 aircraft." According to Stalin ("...18-20 divisions") our losses in the battle of Kharkov amounted to about 200,000 men "given to the enemy", i.e. killed and captured. The Stalinist military estimate of losses is closer to modern Russian studies (according to the data given in FI, 207,047 people were surrounded, that is, they were killed or captured) than to the German one during the war years (239,036 prisoners only) .

5

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

\\ About Volchaney \ FOR Ir. 5 | 74 < ÿ Groitskoye

A OG0-ZAYADNY FRONT babysitter

Cossack ola NY

KUD® <= chiinnin POLOOFME GO TO HER REEANIN Rnvarya

E ARMY s a | 4 eta m Varley -& | 54 fight gra 4 and : ----

those

4 _ M>=" | >. i < a r 5 | => - Non-working counters and a Tsarichanko g a in A x · _ TTX RAF: L AGA, ii I .

AV Lisichansk

©) m 8. Chonets

32. == Poriie zoisi on yrko@a village TREREMY 3 January

—

Ud} th r

Subcode RE zoysi f OH - not ® area yva

Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya offensive operation. January 1942 (from A. Grechko)

Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya. This semicircle is usually referred to geographically as the Barvenkovskii ledge. However, the chief of the General Staff, B. Shaposhnikov, who was stingy with "hat-throwing", called this ledge as befits a military man – an operational "bag". From the end of January, the offensive operation, which later, according to its real results, was called Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya, developed into a defensive operation and continued until March.

2. In March, almost without a break, another bloody, but little-known from the official histories of the war Kharkov operation began, carried out by the SWN command as two separate operations:

- On March 7, the 6th and 38th armies of the Southwestern Front went on the offensive, which were supposed to defeat the Chuguev-Balakleyevsky group of enemy troops and liberate Kharkov';

- On March 12, the 9th Army and operational

'
Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 150.

6

Oeg Etgisl Bedegzel Fzlit chop. 1942 - Eskrepeg Waakleo

Bark r. |. 294.30 A", U _" n`Ofnavkom \ —= th G C 9" vsnoogem

9^

95409

17. Agtee

Vogmep o\cha

7.2

NK

0 in No. 2 UoNol NKE vog givz. Epmey

<— Vovsesmeg Enbgis Re V071046 NKE y \$ kt in Money Mine Uecheg Aiemetype

Codecl e OKN y. 6.12.41

Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya offensive operation. January 1942 (from the history of the 44th Infantry Division)

G

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

naya group of A. Grechko of the Southern Front in order to defeat the Slavic-Kramatorsk group of German troops '.

Intense battles with heavy losses continued throughout March and the first ten days of April. However, it was not even possible to expand the throat of the Barvenkovsky operational "sack", and part of the troops of the South-Western Front and the Southern Front were still in a semi-circle.

3. As a result of these operations (January-February and March-April), the troops of the South-Western direction lost an average of 110-130 thousand people every month and only by mid-March, when the end of the fighting was still very far away (3 1st German Panzer Division, for example, had not yet struck at Moskalenko's troops), had a shortage of personnel only in rifle formations of 370,888 people.

4. Preparations for the third, May, Kharkiv operation began in March and were carried out not only in the conditions of the constant loss of fired personnel with their replacement by recruits, but also in conditions of practically zero knowledge of the enemy. It's a shame to talk about it, but for the period from June 1941 to March 1942, the Soviet command did not find out how many tanks, according to the state, the German tank division consists of!

On March 22, 9 months after the start of the war, Gimoshenko, Khrushchev and Bagramyan unintentionally misinformed Stalin and the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command: "If we assume that all tank and motorized divisions currently located against the South-Western direction, will be replenished again to the level of the beginning of the war, then we will have against the troops of the South-Western direction ... in the first vari-

Grechko A.A. War years. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1976. - S. 129.

2 From the report of the High Command of the South-Western Direction No. 00137/op to the Headquarters of the Supreme Command on the situation that had developed by mid-March 1942 on the fronts of the South-Western Direction, and considerations about the prospects for combat operations of the troops of the direction in the spring and summer of 1942. dated 03/22/1942 (Military History Journal. - 1989. - No. 12).

8

Konstantin Bykov

ante 7400 and the second - 3700 tanks. However, taking into account the significant losses of the enemy throughout the entire period of the war with us, it is more likely that he will be able to have the number of tanks against the South-Western direction according to the second option, i.e. up to 3700 units! At the same time, under the first option, the High Command of the YuZN understood the full staff of the division, which, in its opinion, was 300 tanks for TD and 250 tanks for MD, and under the second, incomplete version, 250 and 50 tanks, respectively. In fact, the full staff of a German tank division, where only one of the three regiments was tank, ranged from 150 to 220 tanks (for 2- and 3-battalion tank regiments, respectively).

With an average strength of a fully equipped tank division of [70-180 tanks], the sinister role played in the Kharkov battle by this catastrophic overestimation of enemy forces becomes understandable. When, on May 13, German tanks struck at the troops of our northern grouping, and when, contrary to expectation, it turned out that not one, but two tank divisions were striking, that is, not 250-500 tanks, as was wrongly believed, but what were prepared for, but 500-1000 tanks, then the nerves of the Soviet command should have faltered and it should have forbidden, at least until the situation was clarified, the introduction of two tank corps into battle in the sector of the southern strike group. However, in reality, two German tank divisions had fewer tanks in their composition than those 250-500, which the 38th, 28th and 21st armies were ready to repulse the counterattack. Both German tank divisions could have been halved by the 22nd tank corps of the 38th army, if it really existed, and was not scattered by brigades over rifle divisions. The second half of the German tanks could

There. (From the report of the High Command of the South-Western Direction No. 00137/opot 03/22/1942.)

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

to finish off Soviet aviation, which lost air supremacy only on May 18 ...

In fact, being in a semi-encirclement (in an operational "bag"), the Soviet tank corps were not brought into battle due to the lack of air cover, since all the aviation that was supposed to provide the southern strike group was sent to help the northern strike - Noah grouping!. The second reason for not bringing the corps into battle was the mistake of "partisan intelligence", based on data from which the Soviet command believed that non-German tanks were in Zmiev, that is, on the right flank of the 6th Army of Gorodnyansky, which had gone on the offensive. It was logical to assume that any minute these tanks would fall on the flank of Gorodnyansky and then the moment would come when this attack could be neutralized by tank corps.

5. The fact that the Battle of Kharkov was lost to a large extent due to poor reconnaissance is also evidenced by data on the number of reconnaissance aircraft from the opposing sides. According to the table given by Begunov, Litvinchuk and Sutulov? With reference to the inaccessible 5th edition of the Collection of Military Historical Materials for 1951, the Southwestern Front had at its disposal only 10 reconnaissance aircraft against 90 German reconnaissance aircraft. In other words, the Germans had a ninefold advantage in tracking our mobile troops, with all the ensuing consequences...

However, listing the mistakes of the Soviet command made in the period of preparation for the operation is an extremely ungrateful and subjective matter - after all, the bulk of the documents, both Soviet and German, relating to the Kharkov battle are still not available to the general public.

'
Moskalenko K.S. Decree. op. - S. 191. 2 Military History Journal. - 1990. - No. 1.

10

b

—_I in risersny

168 pd: Yakovlavo Yo o Korocha FOR THE SOUTHWESTERN x oVozhchansk FRONT

Ovely Well

· I Rubizhnoye ` Opetropdalovka Bogodukhov r and. wto! (.) Saltoe (Vel. Burluk ou 7 Martovo

·
- I'm at ZVA

I am orion [33 |

/| |"

GR. ARMY ..SOUTH" "

-

..

28 Zo

F. Zhryusyaog}

Pavlograd |

DNEPROPETROVSK r and 20 pd (r)

mi Position of the parties at 1.1 and t

prioritization Positioned sides and iscods 11.5 = = immediate task

CHERIE

ARM. NLEIST GROUP

Kharkov battle. May 1942 (from K. Moskalenko)

eleven

Ofets + zveg Sedepopogi +

Year 7. <

- <" her

f—=

UR

\$. # A GesNudgem xx Kir]ap5k - G o

\ e Apdge]emKa

Wax! eo

(ra#Kgazzpoagad

th [

met ohm m. o "8 y \ yup5K

ak Govomoa K i. ,

ATechopago\m co

⌋= 2 Offleswe Ropgehapog! Te mosp "ViCheg eg Mospe" MENE) Sesleste 11. - Apogee Rofe 178

No. No. @ megosmopepe NKY ChegoisoodeBep mouth OK\

Kharkov battle. May 1942 (from the history of the 44th Infantry Division)

12

Konstantin Bykov

publicity. And is it right to focus on the mistakes of the Soviet command, if in just a few months the victors near Kharkov will be destroyed in Stalingrad, and the "people's general" of Germany Paulus, in contrast to the Soviet generals who died in the Kharkov cauldron!, will shamefully surrender?

With this book, we tried to supplement the already revealed information about the Battle of Kharkov with the help of previously untranslated foreign sources into Russian.

The right to talk about the battle of Kharkov in general, we gave the neutral Swedes.

To cover certain moments of this bloody battle, the stories of the following enemy formations and units were selected by the "fascist international":

— 71st Infantry Division: a fresh, replenished and rested unit in the West, with experience in fighting on the Eastern Front. Operated against the northern shock group of Soviet troops;

— 3rd Panzer Division: played a key role in stopping the offensive of the northern strike group of the Soviet troops. Took part in the battle against the southern shock group of Soviet troops;

— 51st bomber squadron "Edelweiss": assisted the Germans encircled in Ternova, which led to a weakening of the offensive of the northern strike group from

The GV encirclement died: Deputy Commander of the Southwestern Front, Lieutenant General F.Ya. Kostenko, commander and member of the Military Council of the 6th Army, Lieutenant General A.M. Gorodnyansky and brigade commissar I.A. Vlasov, commander, member of the Military Council, chief of staff and commander of artillery of the 57th Army, Lieutenant General K.P. Podlas, brigade commissar A.I. Popenko, Major General A.F. Anisov, Major General of Artillery F.G. Malyarov, commander of the army group, Major General L.V. Bobkin, commander of the 21st Tank Corps, Major General G.I. Kuzmin, commanders of the 150th, 47th, 270th and 337th rifle divisions, Major General D.G. Egorov, F.N. Matykin, 3.Yu. Kutlin, I.V. Vasiliev and many others.

13

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Veteran troops and the transfer of the main attack of the 28th Army from the northern to the southern flank;

- The 244th division of assault guns: together with the 113th infantry division, stood in the way of the tank brigades of the 6th army and the Bobkin group after the collapse of the defense of the 62nd infantry division and the 454th security division;

- The 6th Romanian Army Corps: held the defense in the southwestern corner of the Barvenkovsky operational "bag", took part in the counteroffensive and in the destruction of the encircled Soviet troops;

- 14th Panzer Division: was the main "violin" of the breakthrough of the Soviet front in the Barvenkovo direction, prevented the deblocking actions of the Sherstyuk group;

— 16th Panzer Division: the main tool for breaking through the Soviet front in the Izyum direction, did not allow the Soviet troops to reach the area near Bolshaya Andreevka, which was the starting point for a breakthrough;

- 1st mountain division: one of the main participants in the battles with the Soviet troops escaping from the encirclement between Lozovenka and Protopopovka;

— 369th Croatian Reinforced Infantry Regiment: an example of the actions of the allies of Nazi Germany as part of a Wehrmacht division;

- 384th Infantry Division: a fresh division that had not previously fought, participated in blocking the actions of the Sherstyuk group at Chepel and in the battles at Protopopovka;

— 257th Infantry Division: "Kharkov old-timer" who lost his regimental colors. She took part in blocking the Donets between Mayaki and Izyum.

The battle of nations, unprecedented in its scale, which unfolded in May 1942 in the Kharkov region and in which the Germans, Romanians, Italians, Magyars, Slovaks, Croats and Walloons took part, ended in a colossal, catastrophic defeat for the troops of our international Red Army. .

This defeat was the most unjustified for us,

Konstantin Bykov

my most offensive in the entire history of the Great Patriotic War.

"It is difficult to convey our state of mind in those days. After all, we quite recently assumed that a radical turning point had come in the war, that the enemy would never again seize the initiative. And here again is a severe defeat, which could not but entail the most gloomy consequences," wrote S.P. Ivanov.

However, this was the last encirclement battle that our enemies won!

SWEDEN, 1942: THE FIRST BOOK ABOUT THE KHARKOV BATTLE

In August 1942, a thin little book came out in Sweden, only more than two dozen pages, which was entirely devoted to the battle near Kharkov'. This rare book is valuable because it is the world's first description of the course of the battles near Kharkov in May 1942.

Despite the inaccuracies inevitable for such an early edition, we offer this rare booklet as an introduction to a foreign view of the Battle of Kharkov:

TANK BATTLE AT KHARKOV May 12 - 29, 1942

Information about the ongoing hostilities that came to us from various places and areas of operations was, of course, to a large extent insufficient and therefore erroneous. In view of this, the picture of military events on land, at sea and in the air remains unclear and unsatisfactory.

However, this cannot prevent us from trying to study what is happening now and draw the necessary lessons for our national defense system. The Military Historical Department of the General Staff - in close cooperation

! Rapzag {aret y: 4 Sragkow. En 12-29 Mau 1942. AkaeYa Miyaga ZrOgzte. ZyusKno/t. 1942. \$.3. The book was published in August 1942. Translation from Swedish - L.M. Wendt, May 2007. All diagrams and photographs in this chapter are taken from the Swedish original.

Konstantin Bykov

in cooperation with other departments of the headquarters - studies military events in order to use the experience gained for Swedish practice in national defense.

**

Some of the research results and some of the earlier reports were questionable and unsatisfactory. Further reports will either rule out or confirm previous assumptions... Perhaps the lessons learned from previous information are already outdated and worthless.

With this in mind, a series has recently been launched called: Current Military Issues...

INTRODUCTION

Tank battles near Kharkov on May 12-29, 1942 paved the way for a deep offensive in the East, which began in the summer of 1942 and continues to this day. The concept of a tank battle has become very widespread in recent years. However, perhaps

public opinion is not always completely clear about what it means and what includes
this concept...

Military art and military equipment were often dissimilar in different places... The experience of conquering the plain around Kharkov cannot be directly transferred to Norwegian soil. But to be able to give a reason to think about the possibilities of a tank offensive and the countermeasures provided to it in this case would, perhaps, be useful ...

As for the proportions among the armored forces and anti-tank forces that have developed since the war began in 1939, this is a whole saga.

17

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

A look at the tank war 1939-1941

... IF Germany drew far-reaching conclusions about the wars of the 1930s, the opposite side continued to hold different ideas, which were imprinted by the period of the First World War and which, especially in France, were a pronounced defensive character. Particularly sharp was the difference concerning the organization of tank weapons and the use ... The French, for example, believed that tank troops were more or less auxiliary weapons for infantry, and therefore they for the most part occupied a relatively insignificant place in the organization armies...

The campaign in Poland in the autumn of 1939 proceeded as a rivalry between modern and obsolete military art and at the same time showed the unequivocal superiority of the intensive use of tank troops.

Shortly thereafter, the winter war broke out in Finland, where the Finnish army, with a very small tank force, stopped a Russian tank attack in Karelia, which, with the stubbornness of the Finnish anti-tank defense, revealed at least an unfortunate weakness. The problem with this was mainly that the Russians used tank troops exclusively as an auxiliary weapon for the infantry and at the same time extremely dispersed their forces. The group of troops in Karelia used Russian tanks in even smaller groups, consisting of only 3 or 4 crews, which supported the infantry and were therefore often easy prey for Finnish anti-tank patrols. In the very mechanism that made the attack of the Russian tank troops on Karelia unsuccessful, the experience of the tank tactics of the First World War was only repeated. It didn't make much sense for Russian tank troops to be inside the Finnish forest territory. Cut off from the roads and with open unprotected flanks, the advancing Russian tank columns fell victim to the blocking tactics.

Campaign in Flanders and France in spring and early summer

18

Konstantin Bykov

The one in 1940, in which German armored forces and aircraft were used in modern attacks, achieved decisive victories over a defensive military art that still contained the redneck of the previous world war. In cooperation with the air forces and sapper units! German tank formations took part in the successful breakthrough of the fortifications of the Belgian and French borders...

... The campaign in Libya, launched at the beginning of 1941 was a new period in the history of tank warfare for both opposing sides, which both had modern and equal tank forces ... In Libya, they were the determining factor in the clash of forces against-

nicknames. The situation was identical in the campaign against Russia in the summer of 1941, where modern tank troops, of hitherto unknown size, met on the fields to beat ...

LLL

Before meeting the strong Russian tank forces, the Germans consolidated their tank forces into larger tank groups. Such an army consisted of 4 panzer divisions, that is, approximately 1,600 tanks?, together with a certain number of motorized divisions. During the Russian campaign, the Germans had three tank armies?, which were distributed over three army groups.

Subsequently, two more appeared. Connections from non-

' The Swedes in 1942 saw something that our military leaders did not see even after the war (judging by their memoirs). The success of German tanks was determined not only by interaction with aviation (strictly speaking, in 1941, aviation supported only one of the four German tank groups - the Guderian group), but also by interaction with sapper units, which always went at the head of tank battle groups. It couldn't have been otherwise. After all, without sappers, without their pontoon bridge parks, tanks brought into the breach instantly lose their advantage -

mobility.

* The Swedes overestimate the number of tanks in a German tank division by about two times.

3 The Swedes call an army a tank group, of which the Germans had not three, but four in 1941.

19

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

German tank combat units on the Eastern Front, therefore, had about 8,000 tanks. The army tank group was used to attack the army flanks ... The goals and their implementation were the same as in the old days of the cavalry striking the flank battle formations.

Russian tank troops consisted of divisions and brigades and were distributed among armies and smaller military formations. The entire grouping of Russian tank troops during the German offensive in the summer of 1941 was estimated at 3 divisions and 39 brigades. Since the Russian tank divisions consisted of two tank brigades, and the tank brigades numbered 300 tanks, the number of Russian tanks was therefore about 13,500. The numerical superiority, in any case, was significant for the Russian side.

... German tank formations were able to break through the Russian defenses, encircle and destroy significant forces. Without a doubt, this depended primarily on the ability to split the Russian tank formations. However, none of these breakthroughs reached such a depth as, for example, the tank operation on Abbeville and Langres during the breakthrough in the West, and therefore did not have a definite meaning. This was undoubtedly a consequence of the fact that the Russian tank troops, despite their less expedient use, and hence the number of failures, due to the quantitative composition of the troops, were still able to put up significant resistance ...

German and Russian ratio of tank forces in the spring of 1942

There are no reliable data on the losses of tank materiel in the campaign against Russia in 1942. It was nevertheless obvious that both sides had lost a significant amount of such materiel...

' Tank divisions were part of mechanized (in fact, tank) corps.

2? According to the state, in the Soviet tank division there were 375 tanks, in the motorized division - 275. However, at the beginning of the war there were no tank brigade.

20

Konstantin Bykov

The total number of German tank divisions in the spring of 1942 was about 45-50, which meant an increase of more than 100 percent compared to the spring of 1941. On the Russian side in winter, the delivery of British and American tank materiel took place. Significant was also a significant increase in the domestic production of tanks in Russia itself. The German side took into account the still significant Russian superiority in quantitative terms.

The situation in southern Russia in early May 1942

After German successes in the summer and autumn of 1941 and Russian successes in November, offensives and counteroffensives along the entire front line in southern Russia ceased on New Year's Eve, and the front stabilized approximately along the line Donetsk-Stalino-Taganrog-Crimea. In January, the Russians launched a successful offensive south of Kharkov and, before stopping, pushed the Germans back to the headwaters of the Orel River. The front line in this area formed one large arc facing west. It went from Balakleya northwest along the Donetsk to the bend of this river in the area southwest of Andreevka. Further, the front line stretched southwest to Likhachevo on the Lozovaya-Kharkov railway. Then it went along the Orel River in its upper reaches, turned in the south-west from the Lozovaya station in an easterly direction and followed further south of the railway. Lozovaya - Slavyansk in the direction of the Mayaks, which are located 6 km north of Slavyansk. While the western side of this arc between the turn of the Donetsk in the north and south of Lozovaya extended for about 100 km, the mouth of this arc between Balakleya and Mayaky was only 80 km wide. At the beginning of May 1942 the front line still had this configuration. As a starting point for continuing the operation to attempt a breakthrough, this arc inside the German line of defense, due to its relatively negligible width, was hardly advantageous for the Russians. And, conversely, to

21

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the Germans, primarily because of the relatively narrow mouth between Balakleya and Mayaki, returned the opportunity to encircle the enemy.

During the late winter and spring, significant forces were concentrated on the front of southern Russia, and in early May it became an important task to regroup them on the Kerch Peninsula in the Crimea and partly east of Kharkov. Within the mentioned area, there was a concentration of about

LJ No. GizAs Sgirreg

p 9, in / rogob' XX 222. ”

about \$0

o Jo 5wot54

\$49409

5 56agui/ 5a/box

NAVCOU

\$yogohegoiko

No. a/aAleya 0>.

(Isla 65 yeyoy

ha5logo9goya

;^`. 7"5/ocuap54

Chekhaptago.4a ONI A [Barvenkovsky ledge.

22

Konstantin Bykov

30 infantry divisions, 6-8 cavalry divisions and about 20 tank brigades. Even if the size of a Russian infantry division, according to German data, during this period fell to only 12,000 people, the Russian troops concentrated east of Kharkov, apparently, numbered about 500,000 people. The number of armored vehicles was approximately 6,000.

There is no information about German combat units within this territory. The entire section of the front between the upper Donets and the Sea of Azov was held by the order of General Field Marshal von Bock in the south of the regular army, which initially could have numbered 20 infantry divisions and 3-4 tank divisions (that is, 1200-1600 tanks). Before the upcoming offensive in the direction of Kerch, this army had von Kleist's tank army, which had been moved to the Crimea. Russian numerical superiority in this part of the front was therefore very significant. Especially since the Germans had a decline in the Kharkov sector - the German front-line garrison here was limited to fortifications with weak infantry, artillery and air forces.

FIRST PHASE OF THE BATTLE. RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

The aforementioned concentration of Russian military units indicated that there was a plan for a major offensive in Ukraine, possibly to prevent a planned German attack. The preparation of the Russians, apparently, was not completed. The Germans took up positions around Kerch on 8 May. It was probably too early for the Russian side to go on the offensive on the Kharkov front on May 12. Even if, according to the plan, they intended to relieve pressure near Kerch by this.

The Russian offensive plan was related to the German

There could not have been more than 500-700 tanks in three or four divisions.

23

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

model 1941. However, with such an overestimation, it was not worth using tank troops from a ledge.

In operational terms, based on the plan, the German positions were broken through partly at Aurélie, partly between Stary Saltov and Volchansk, after which the intention to begin the operation of encircling the territory west of Kharkov with strikes from the south and east became obvious.

The strike group in the upper Aurelie consisted, according to German information, of the 6th and 57th armies and included approximately 20 infantry divisions, 7 cavalry divisions and 14 tank brigades. They were divided into three columns: on the left - to attack the railway. near Krasnograd. Further — in the direction of Staroverovka, which is located at a distance of about 60 km southwest of Kharkov. And above - the head column - advanced along the railway. near Kharkov". Shock group,

located between Stary Saltov and Volchansk, could consist of 8 - 10 infantry divisions, | - 2 cavalry divisions and 5 - 6 tank brigades. This group consisted of two columns: on the left - probably the lead column - to attack from the area from Stary Saltov directly to Kharkov. And above - from the area south of Volchansk - directly to the west?

| On the Barvenkovsky ledge, from which the attack on Kharkov began and which, initially, was, as it were, a semi-encirclement of Soviet troops, there were two Soviet tank corps and several tank brigades. The deliberate placement of such a number of tanks in a semicircle was, in our opinion, a completely unjustified risk.

? This three-column (according to the Swedes) construction of the southern Soviet strike force can be deciphered as follows (from south to north): Bobkin's army group with the 6th Cavalry Corps and the 7th Tank Brigade advanced on Krasnograd, part of the 6th Army of Gorodnyansky with the 23rd Tank Corps - to Staroverovka, another part of the 6th Army with the 21st Tank Corps - to Kharkov. The 57th Army of Podlas covered the advancing formations from the south.

3 The northern shock group of Soviet troops consisted of (from north to south) Gordov's 21st Army, Ryabyshev's 28th Army, and Moskalenko's 38th Army. The main striking force was Ryabyshev, whose flanks were covered by Moskalenko and Gordov. The division of this group by the Swedes into two columns arose due to the shift in the direction of the main attack of the 28th Army from flank to flank, as a result of which Ryabyshev achieved maximum advance not in his center, but at the junctions with the 38th and 21st armies.

24

Konstantin Bykov

The center of gravity in the offensive fell, therefore, on the southern shock units. And, apparently, Kharkov was the closest operational target for the concentration of troops from both strike groups. The accumulation of large tank formations on a narrow sector of the front showed the intention to use operational tank forces on the German model, thanks to the success of which - to direct the blow at a distant target.

= => GAS ABOUT Sgirreg |

›Vue/rogod envia a) suzls about \$0 km 2 Row | EV, © ^ } || [44 => kegagu/ 5/6 he navkou inutsuvi # | < bAlagvuvuis \$6agoiegonyo Ra one , Wegeko \ _ [Volalivua / ,spo 5ueio chi. o ri Vh tag >. \ oh oh go5lo9go a“ \ \ x \ l/eleuenda \ o / p ` \ 9, o50hepAa yy“ © \ "o > , \ | , >

Wagielyaono Mao, and

®/ `` b © \ [050"] r t | FE>- I VAS

Meleharagouka |

The first phase of the battle. Russian offensive.

25

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Powerful air forces had to interact with both strike groups.

The preparations for the offensive were, apparently, a great deal of concern. In particular, it was necessary to use the moment of surprise. However, at the last moment, luck almost betrayed the secret existence of the tank formation. In the Alekseevka area! German reconnaissance was able to establish a large tank formation, which began moving forward late in the evening.

The Russian attack began, as has already been said, early on the 12th May. Approximately at 0300, an extremely heavy artillery raid began on the entire Kharkov sector. And soon after that, both strike groups, accompanied by powerful tank and air forces, went on the attack. The weak German defense wavered. The immediate engagement and the skillfully executed withdrawal at the start of the Russian attack were able to prevent an immediate breakthrough. Particularly stubborn was the defense against the concentrated Russian troops west of Sary Saltov and along the Lozovaya-Kharkov railroad.

To the northeast of Kharkov, the defense was carried out mainly by infantry. At first, she kept the Russians for a long time. However, on May 13, a gap was created in the German positions of Sary Saltov. Nevertheless, even after that, seven more tank attacks were repulsed. The attacking side lost 80 tanks in the process. Already on the same day, the enemy was driven back by German tank formations arriving from the area southeast of Kharkov, which began to advance to the northeast.

At positions near the Lozovaya-Kharkov railway, south-west of Likhachevo, there was only one is not

On the eve of the Soviet offensive, the 5th Guards Tank Brigade was located in the Alekseevka area, to the south - the 38th brigade, to the north - the 48th brigade. Soviet tank corps were much east.

2 We are talking about the 3rd and 23rd German tank divisions, which struck from the south on the northern shock group of Soviet troops, first on the 38th, then on the 28th army.

26

Konstantin Bykov

a German infantry battalion and one small artillery unit. This unit was soon surrounded by self-cheering Russian attackers. At this time, in a hurry, the Hungarian battalion, along with several heavy anti-tank guns and 8.8-cm anti-aircraft guns, moved to new positions above the Berezhskaya railway station, where he took up defense by the evening of May 12. After that, a small part of a company of scooters, some cavalry and a few Sturmgeschütz who arrived? held the attacking side in this area until May 14. On the aforementioned day, the defense was nevertheless driven back by strong Russian tank and air attacks.

In the meantime, further south, the Russians had made a major success. On May 14, both more successful columns of the southern strike group broke through the German positions in the Aurélie area and the next day found themselves in the neighborhood of Krasnograd and Staroverovka?. The situation was thus extremely critical for the Germans, especially when on May 16 the Russians increased their pressure in the northeast of Kharkov *, and also near the railway. Lozovaya - Kharkov, where the Germans on the night of May 17

In this area, according to the atlas of Glantz, there was the 62nd infantry division, which was attacked by the 411th infantry division of the 5th guards. brigade and, possibly, parts of the 266th sds of the 38th brigade and parts of the 41st sds of the 48th brigade. The 41st Rifle Division also advanced on the positions of the 108th Hungarian Light Infantry Division. According to Baghramyan, the German 454th security division was in the area of Likhachevo (Pervomaisky).

2 Perhaps the "Sturmgeschütz" were from the 194th assault gun battalion, which was located in this area and was attached to the 62nd infantry division (according to the "Front illustration"). Not far from the scene, in the rear of the 62nd infantry division, there was the 244th self-propelled gun division attached to the 113th infantry division (according to Togtai and Kigo \ \$ Yu).

3 Rapzagavre{ 14 SwagKouch. 5. 15. Krasnograd was in the offensive zone of the Bobkin army group, the vanguard of which was the 6th cavalry corps. Staroverovka, located to the north, closer to Kharkov, was in the offensive zone of the 6th army of Gorodnyansky.

* We are talking about the northern shock group of Soviet troops (21st, 28th and 38th armies), which were advancing on Kharkov from the northeast.

27

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

were forced to quickly retreat to new positions north of Taranovka.

Gradually, by May 15 and 16, German reinforcements arrived, in particular, bomber aircraft and tank units. After their use for a counterattack on threatening areas, Russian attacks were repelled everywhere and the situation stabilized... To the west of Stary Saltov and Volchansk, the Russians were successful, advancing 20 km into the German position. They stopped only 30 km from Kharkov.

SECOND PHASE OF THE BATTLE. GERMAN COUNTERATTACK

It soon became obvious to the German military command that it would be impossible for a long time to overcome the Russian offensive that had begun, if we did not concentrate our forces to the maximum for a decisive counteroffensive. Arrangements were made to gather the forces required for this. This looked like a regrouping within the southern army groups and units, in particular, the southern tank army of Kleist was involved, which was entrusted with part of the tasks?. The forces released from the Kerch Peninsula in the Crimea were also involved, in particular, aviation. Further, the tank army of Paulus, which was previously in the central army group, arrived at the disposal of the southern army group?. Obviously, combat units and

! Taranovka was in the offensive zone of the 6th Army (the southern shock group of Soviet troops) and was defended, according to Glanets, by the 108th Hungarian Infantry Division (possibly by the remnants of the 62nd Infantry Division).

2 Obviously, the Swedes did not know that the Germans, while preparing the "Friederikus-1" operation, concentrated their troops in advance to encircle the Barvenkovsky salient.

3 Paulus had the rank of General of Tank Forces and commanded the 6th Combined Arms Army, not the Tank Army. It is obvious that the Swedes call the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions "Panzer Army of Paulus", which organizationally, together with several infantry divisions, were united in the corps group of Bright, the commander of the 3rd Panzer Division. Previously, the 3rd TD was part of the Center Civil Aviation, and the 23rd arrived near Kharkov from France.

28 -

Konstantin Bykov

from other sectors of the front they pulled up to Kharkov ... Russian superiority in tank troops was approximately twofold. Without a doubt, it must be assumed that the Russians had a significant superiority also in other military units.

Execution

Field Marshal Bock planned to go on a counterattack, using most of the main forces to blockade the southern Russian strike group, cutting it off in the area west of the Balakleya-Slavyansk line with a simultaneous tank strike along the Donets. At the same time, a smaller part of the troops attacked the northern Russian strike group from three directions. Namely - from Belgorod, from Kharkov and from Chuguev. Von Kleist's tank army was grouped southeast of the Alexandrovka-Slavyansk line, intending to attack to the northwest. The head units of the Paulus tank army took up positions on the bend of the Donets south of Andreevka for an attack in a southerly direction. However, the formations of the front sector south of Kharkov should still be on the defensive. A smaller part of the Paulus tank army was used against the northern Russian strike group. Aviation was required to achieve air supremacy in order to begin. Her main

the goal was to interact with the ground forces, with tank combat units ahead of them.

parts.

The aviation that launched the attack on May 17 won air supremacy on the same day. At the same time, ground forces were advancing northeast of Kharkov. A strong tank battle soon ensued here, where the Russian side lost from 60 to 150 tanks on the first day. On May 19, after two days of stubborn fighting in this sector of the front, the Russians

The entire, and not a smaller part of the "Paulus Panzer Army" was used first against the northern, and then against the southern group of our troops.

29

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the combat units retreated, they went beyond the Donets to their former positions.

Von Kleist's panzer army began to push forward early on 18 May. Quickly breaking down the defenses on the Alexandrovka-Slavyansk line, it moved on at a rapid pace. Only on the Barvenkovo-Izyum line, apparently, strong resistance was met... German aviation worked effectively against this resistance, which actively acted against the Russian ground forces and quite successfully broke off the interaction of the Russians in the upper Donets between Izyum and Balakleya. After an extremely stubborn battle, von Kleist's tank army, quickly overcoming the resistance on the Barvenkovo-Izyum line, continued its rapid movement to the north. Already on May 22, she reached the upper flank at Balakleya and thus closed the ring around the Russian southern shock group.

The tank army of Paulus until now, perhaps, did not take part in the attacks. Meanwhile, the head units were still north of the Donets.

THE THIRD PERIOD OF THE BATTLE. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RUSSIAN SOUTHERN STRIKE GROUP

Planning

After the encirclement was carried out, the starting point was created for the destruction operation, which von Bock immediately launched against the Russian southern strike group. The main imprint of the plan for this operation was the fact that the Russian mass of tanks now began to retreat to the east and, together with the warheads, apparently still remain.

'
Actually, May 17th.

2 Having struck at our northern grouping, the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions ("Paulus' Panzer Army" – Bright's group) turned south towards the Donets and were preparing to strike towards the 14th and 16th Panzer Divisions. southern German group (tank army von Kleist).

thirty

Konstantin Bykov LJ => Guzio sgirreg

Vue/vogos' Xx 22.2.) x o 50 l ii iininani ini Ayshiniosniii km

about 5th 59754 [2

— "

o5sagii 5aox NIKOU \ {ue buek [5 (53 bApageuviko RACETS \$ oogouvgo do and sweat o ® *) 7.7 Vegeka \ d hm }
[spa e5uvioy Ux . | A. naked" , A/ele`uviya

o '4 at 9, [ozoselAa k
^

>

ON THE. No. "about 7 > >. - 2

—

Chehatagoiya and AE! T

The second phase of the battle. German counterattack.

shaft near the river Bereka!'. Thus, the tank army

Kleista intended to attack in the direction of the mentioned

rivers to the west. At the same time, Paulus' tank army was to attack to the south, with the main direction towards Lozovenka. They should have blocked the way

in front of the Russian tank troops and prevent their withdrawal

to the East...

,

We are talking about tank brigades of the 21st 23rd tank corps council

sky southern shock group.

31

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Squeezing the Russian main forces

Both German tank armies began the operation on May 23, but soon met with rather stubborn resistance. At Bereka, in the middle and upper reaches...the biggest tank battle in history took place!. Thanks to the excellent cooperation between the German tank formations, the Air Force and the anti-tank defense, the Russian attacks were repulsed everywhere. The German formations, which had previously acted as a method of defense, did not make a breakthrough until the beginning of May 23 - probably due to Russian resistance, which in many places, such as at Taranovka, was very strong. Soon, the Russian shock detachments, squeezed by the encirclement, found themselves next to each other. And on May 26 they stopped, squeezed to the west of the upper course of the Bereka within the territory of only 40 km long and 25 km wide. Deprived of freedom of movement, together with their materiel, they offered the German aviation an exceptionally grateful target.

Russian counteroffensive

The Russian forces emerging from the ring were still not broken. They made a second strong attempt to break through to the east. South of Lozovenka, one group struck forward and went halfway to the Donets before it was stopped and driven back. In order to help those in the encirclement, a new Russian strike group was created in the area northeast of Mayakov-Balakleya. It, by the way, included units from the northern strike group. And this extremely strong new group concentrated between the mentioned settlements in the Izyum region? To protect German formations from it

|

The tank battle near Kharkov was not a battle in the massive, "Prokhorov" sense. It was a series of battles of scattered tank units.

2 The main deblocking group, the Sherstyuk group, was concentrated in the Savintsev area (near Balakleya).

32

Konstantin Bykov

| = = uru\$Aa (hirreg ld/v/)ogos'

grade ani must 0 \$0 ———— = ———— _ — Sh — M — Sh — Sh ————— s = ——— 5th km oy2/25/9754

\$40

» 569gk/ 5a6oe

NANKOU

Zfogogonegiko |

[161065 4eyoy

gasro9goch

^e;

(ÿ5ÿÿÿÿÿ | , niyoniijs qya .) And' > / okuap54

A / exopago, yes oh

The third period of the battle. The defeat of the southern shock group of Russians.

A defense was organized along the Donets with the help of von Kleist's tank troops, which broke through to Balakleya. And any attempt to cross the river from the Russian side was stopped.

The GV Savintsev area was a Soviet bridgehead, crossings to which were controlled by German aircraft. The 14th Panzer Division from Mackensen's 3rd Army Motorized Corps prevented Sherstyuk's group from developing a deblocking offensive from this bridgehead.

2 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 33

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

denouement

On May 26, the encircled Russian forces were divided into two "bags", north and possibly southwest of Lozovenka, which were looked after by German tank columns. These "bags" in the coming days were divided into even smaller parts, which were destroyed one after another later...

By May 29, the resistance was completely broken. Significant Russian forces were destroyed, and with them the tank army - the largest ever destroyed on the battlefield. Only prisoners and trophies, as indicated by the German side, were captured about 240,000 people, 1249 tanks, 2020 artillery pieces and 538 aircraft.

8.8 cm anti-aircraft gun.

'
According to German data, in the largest encirclement in the history of wars - in the Kiev pocket - 884 tanks were captured and destroyed.

34

Konstantin Bykov

LESSONS

General point of view

... Of particular importance is the first period of this battle, where the German side was forced, without the support of tank formations and with insignificant aviation forces, to defend against Russian tank columns supported by aviation. And with all this, she still delayed the Russian advance for several days - a task that the Poles and French tried in vain to solve in their time, falling under German attacks. This luck is attributed, as far as one can judge, to the great mobility and expediency of using anti-tank units. In addition to 8.8 cm anti-aircraft guns, which were previously used in anti-tank defense, the German defense also used modern heavy anti-tank artillery guns. Probably 8 or 15 cm. Moreover, the significant participation of the "Sturmgeschütz" is also mentioned. Probably,

"Sturmgeschütze" near Kharkov.

35

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Improvised "Sturmgeschütze". A field gun mounted on a tank chassis.

as in Libya, field artillery, both light and heavy, was used, which, for anti-tank purposes, was mounted on tank chassis. Such anti-tank units quickly moved to the threatened sectors of the German defense, which made it possible to repulse Russian attacks before launching a counteroffensive...

'
In the last part of the Swedish little book, which we will not quote here, we are talking about the role of the Swedish terrain, primarily forests, for building anti-tank defenses.

71st INFANTRY DIVISION

A Brief History of the 71st Infantry Division: Formation, Organization, Armament, Command and Battle Path. The 71st Infantry Division (71.1.0.) began to be formed on August 26, 1939, after the 19th Infantry Command in Hildesheim (NldesWeit) received a signal due to the imminent war:

"1.X = 26.8.1939

2. "Sigurd" 9757 to perform.

"These laconic words and figures were evidence of the birth of the 71st division. The sequence of mobilization proceeded according to the established form and plan," the history of the 71st shashchepe-Omzon reports. "Peasants left their incompletely harvested fields, workers and employees left their factories and offices... After the announcement of the call to serve the people and the fatherland, the storekeepers and veterans of the world war arrived in wagons and cars at the disposal of the forming units...

... the 11th division was formed as a division of the 2nd wave in the 11th military district, which stretched from the Weser to the Elbe and covered the regions of Eastern and Southern Hanover, Braunschweig and Saxony ... Within 3 - 4 days form - the formation of the division was completed, and on the whole it went flawlessly "...

Emblem of the 71st Infantry Division.

1 R1e71. Shashchene-Omzyup ip 7menep \leNKnekh 1939 - 1945. RoSheg. Geiressysche, 2006. 3.13.
37

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

According to the wartime staff, the 71st division should have had:

Officers - 491 people

Employees (Weapshchep!) - 98

Non-commissioned officers - 2273

Enlisted personnel - 12411

Total people - 15273

Horses - 4854 .

Wagon - 823

Passenger cars - 393

Trucks - 509

Armored vehicles (Heraptese Eabg2eioe) - 3

Motorcycles - 497

Sidecars for motorcycles (Be1\agen?) - 190

Light machine guns ([.M.S.) - 345

Machine guns (\$.M.S.) 3 - 114

Light infantry guns 7.5 cm (1.1.S.) - 26

Anti-tank guns (Cancer) - 75

Light field howitzers 10.5-cm (T.Eeav.) - 36

Heavy field howitzers 15-cm (5.Neav.) - 12

Sentinel armored vehicles (R7.Zrav-GaNg? eeee) - 3

In the course of preparation for war and during its organizational structure, equipment and weapons
divisions changed:

- previously missing 15-cm heavy infantry guns appeared in service;

- infantry regiments of the division received one engineer platoon each;

— in 1940, machine-gun companies were reorganized: two heavy mortars were added to their
armament, and Maxim machine guns (M.S. 08) were replaced by M.S. 34;

This word can also be translated as "official" and as "policeman".

2 This word can be translated as both "motorcycle sidecar" and "motorcycle sidecar".

3 The letters "y" and "s" before the name of the weapon in literal translation mean "light" and "heavy".

38

Konstantin Bykov

- the companies were reinforced from 9 to 12 squads and received three light mortars;

— the single-detachment mortar platoons existing with machine-gun companies became three-detachment and, consequently, were armed with not two, but six medium mortars metov;

- in 1940, eighteen heavy non-belverfers - 34.8-cm rocket mortars (5.St.M.) were added to the armament of the division;

- in 1941, in order to give greater mobility to units, one company of each regiment became scooter.

In general, according to a thick tome on the history of the 71st Division, between the western and eastern campaigns, the 71st Infantry Division was already equipped as a division of the 1st wave (with the exception of the T-type pontoon-bridge park with the engineer battalion).

By the beginning of the war with the USSR, the 71st Infantry Division consisted of three infantry regiments: [ashchepe Kvezttet: 211 (formed in the spring of 1939 as the 1st training infantry regiment), shashchepe-Keztep: 194 and shashchepe-Kezlteg: 191. In the composition of the regiment of the 71st division on the eve of the war with the USSR included:

- headquarters;

- supply platoon (MasipSchep712);

- sapper platoon;

— musical team (regimental band);

- cavalry platoon;

, - an anti-tank motorized platoon armed with two E-cm and nine 3.7-cm anti-tank guns;

- an artillery company armed with six light (7.-cm) and two heavy (15-cm) infantry guns;

- three infantry battalions.

The infantry battalion of the 71st division consisted of four companies:

— three companies were armed with 12 light machine guns and light mortars each;

- one company (machine gun) had 12 heavy machine guns and 6 medium mortars.

The 71st Infantry Division also included:

- 171st artillery regiment of 4 divisions

39

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

(ACShepe-Veritepe 171). One three-battery battalion of this regiment was armed with twelve 15-cm field howitzers, three more three-battery battalions had twelve 10.5-cm field howitzers each. In addition, each of the four divisions was armed with six light machine guns;

- 171st anti-tank battalion (Rap2epase-AME! Une 171, until April 1940 it was called the anti-tank defense division - Rap7egab \ eVg-AMePipre 171). The division consisted of three motorized batteries, each armed with twelve 3.7 cm anti-tank guns (5 cm in 1942) and six light machine guns;

- 17th reconnaissance battalion (AtsVAgipe5- ASHEIPH 171). It was formed on the basis of the 14th cavalry regiment and on the eve of the war with the USSR consisted of cavalry, scooter and heavy motorized squadrons. The cavalry squadron of the 17th reconnaissance battalion was armed with nine light and two heavy machine guns, the scooter squadron was armed with nine light machine guns and three light mortars. The heavy motorized squadron was armed with two light guns, three 3.7 cm anti-tank guns and two light armored personnel carriers. Before its death in Stalingrad, the reconnaissance battalion was renamed into a scooter battalion (Ka Favg-Aeliph 171). After the restoration of the division in 1943, it became known as the fusilier battalion (Ogz10op5-EusSher-Vaashon 171);

- 171st sapper battalion (Ploseg-VzhaSop 171). It consisted of: three sapper companies, a light sapper column and a bridge column (pontoon-bridge park type "T"). Each of the three sapper companies, one of which was motorized, was armed with nine light machine guns;

- 171st divisional communications battalion (shashepe-O1 \ - \$ 1015 - MaspisShep-AShePiph 171). The battalion consisted of three motorized subdivisions: a radio company (EapKKotrashe), a telephone company (EerizrgesVKotrash:e) and a light communication column (PMaspischMeptKotrache);

40

Konstantin Bykov

- 171st Divisional Logistics Directorate (Pÿashchepe- Rtu1 \$ yu15- MaspzsnibEiger 171). It consisted of three motorized supply columns, three mounted supply columns, three light mounted supply columns, one motorized supply company, one motorized fuel and lubricants supply column, and one motorized repair company;

- 171st field reserve battalion (Eeeers {-BaaSop 171). In the 71st Infantry Division of the first formation, it existed only in 1941. Was reinstated in 1943 in the division of the second formation;

- 171st economic service (VeguaNip2\$ en e 171). This service consisted of a motorized bakery company (VasKegeIKotrashe), a motorized company of cattle slaughterers (Es ShasshegeKotrape) and a department of food supply (OmzyuopzuegrNegip? apt);

- 171st sanitary medical service (Zap (\$ Chepe 171). It consisted of: a motorized sanitary company, a mounted sanitary company, a field motorized infirmary and three sanitary cars;

- 171st veterinary company (Ushcheppat Kotrashe 171).

The 71st Infantry Division also included a motorized Feljandarmerie and field mail.

The main stages of the combat path of the 71st Infantry Division were not original:

1939 - until the end of the year, the 71st Infantry Division was in the OKH reserve;

1940 - Maginot, Luxembourg;

1941 - Lvov, Kyiv, Belgium;

1942 - Belgium, France, Kharkov, Don, Stalingrad;

1943 - death in Stalingrad.

In the same year, 1943, the 71st division of the 2nd formation was created in Denmark, which fought on the Western Front and almost completely died in the Monte Cassino area. The remnants of the division in 1945 surrendered to British captivity.

During the battle near Kharkov, the division was part of the 51st Army Corps of the 6th Army of the South Army Group.

41

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

From March 28, 1941 to January 26, 1943, the 71st Infantry Division was commanded by General of Infantry Alexander von Hartmann (December 11, 1890, Berlin - January 26, 1943, Stalingrad area). On August 2, 1914, Lieutenant Alexander von Hartmann (Aehandeg wop Natztapp) was appointed platoon commander in a machine gun company of the 94th Infantry Regiment. After being seriously wounded in 1915, Lieutenant Hartmann continued his service in the reserve machine-gun battalion. Von Hartmann's further promotion proceeded as follows:

1921 - company commander;

1925 - Hauptmann, service at the headquarters of an infantry battalion;

1926 - company commander;

1931] - major; —

1934 - Oberst Lieutenant, battalion commander;

1937 - oberst, army liaison officer with the fleet, regiment commander;

194] - major general, commander;

1942 - awarded the Knight's Cross;

1943 - died on a railway embankment near Tsaritsyn (Stalingrad), posthumously promoted to General of Infantry.

Commander of the 71st Infantry Division von Hartmann.

Arrival of the 71st Infantry Division near Kharkov in April 1942. During the French campaign, in 1940, the 71st Division lost about one battalion killed - 12 officers and 267 privates. In 1941, having passed from the Soviet border to Kyiv, the 71st Infantry Division already lost its regiment, having lost 46 officers and 916 privates killed. She lost three more regiments wounded - 106 officers and 3150 privates (regular

42

Konstantin Bykov

the strength of the regiment ranged from 962 to 1008 people). The "Lucky Division" ("Sakpayep 0/u1510n"), as the soldiers informally called it, was rebuilding its forces in Europe. However, the French "glitch" did not last long. The moment came when it was necessary to go to the Eastern Front again ...

"After the failure of the German armed forces in 1941 to defeat Russia, the clearly anticipated goal of the highest German military leadership for 1942 was the decisive destruction of Russian military and economic power. This would have created the prerequisites for a speedy victorious end to the campaign to the East," the chroniclers of the 71st Infantry Division tell us. "However, the forces necessary for a general offensive along the entire Eastern Front were not at the disposal of the command. Therefore, the top German leadership decided to attack first only in the south.

On April 5, 1942, the commanders were given instruction No. 55616/42 OK/U/\UUE5. Mr. K.? for the summer operation in the East. Was the first part of this operation intended to eliminate Russian superiority on the front south of Kharkov? and shifting the front closer to the middle Donets and Oskol to reach favorable starting positions. This should be followed by the main operation in the direction of Stalingrad, for which, by the beginning of July, Army Group South should brimming with refreshed and new compounds.

The 71st Infantry Division also belonged to the number of formations reinforcing Army Group South.

ÿ ÿLaskv translated from German means "happiness".

2 The document with this number is better known to us as Hitler's Directive No. 41.

3 This refers to the Barvenkovsky ledge, which was formed during the January Barvenkovo Lozovsky operation of the Soviet troops.

* We are talking about Operation Frederikus-1, as a result of which the Barvenkovskiy ledge was to be eliminated, and Operation Wilhelm, an exit to the area from which it was possible to launch Operation Blau, an attack on Stalingrad.

43

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

In April 1942, the division was to be returned from France to the Eastern Front and stationed in the Kharkov region. From April 18, its units began to arrive in Lyubotin, a suburb west of Kharkov. Since no use was envisaged for the main forces of the division for the next 2-3 weeks, the military units arriving in Kharkov and its region were located separately in places for rest.

The city of Kharkov itself, due to its overcrowding with headquarters and rear units, could offer very meager apartments. Nevertheless, visiting the cinema and theater by the army was possible" ...

April 28 - May 11. Occupation of initial positions by the 211th Infantry Regiment of the 71st Infantry Division and the forces opposing it. However, as "Ge 71. shöaschepe-Ory1\$10n t Imecep UeCKper 1939-1945" informs us, they did not have to rest for a long time: "On April 28, 1.K.211 (211th Infantry Regiment) was ordered to provide assistance to 294.1. 0. (294th Infantry Division), which was attacked by the Russians in the area of Ternova?. In cool weather, along a wet road, the regiment marches in the direction of Mikhailovka-Ivanovka and occupies assigned quarters in the evening.

Early on the morning of April 29, the companies advance through Mikhailovka, Nepokryataya and Peremoga towards Kupyevakha?. On bad roads, after a long march, having been attacked by Russian fighters and shelling, while suffering the first losses, the regiment with great efforts reaches in the dark

| Oe71. Ashene-Ogmyup pp Imecap U'eEKpew 1939 - 1945. 5.171.

2 Ternovaya is located 35 km northeast of Kharkov. On that day, in the area east of Ternovaya (villages: Izbitskoye, Varvarovka, Bayrak) were: the 175th (Major General A.D. Kuleshov) and units of the 169th (Colonel S.M. Rogachevsky) rifle divisions 28th Army D.I. Rya bysheva. Earlier, during the March battles for these settlements, these divisions were part of the 38th Army of K.S. Moskalenko.

< upievakha - now the village of Ukrainka. It is located 3 km east of Peremoga, between the Bolshaya Babka and Seversky Donets rivers.

44

Konstantin Bykov

Kupievahi. Even at night, the positions of the changing troops were occupied, and the units of the regiment were put on combat readiness.

However, the arrival of this regiment to the front, as well as the arrival near Kharkov of the entire 71st Infantry Division, did not go unnoticed by Soviet intelligence. Just at the end of April, part of the area, previously recaptured from the Germans by the 38th Army and transferred to the 28th Army, was again returned to the 38th Army. The positions occupied by the 211th regiment of the 71st infantry division were in front of the left flank of the 28th army of D.I. Ryabyshev and in front of the right flank of the 38th army of K.S. Moskalenko.

"The scouts of the 38th Army noticed the appearance of a regiment of a new division in our offensive zone," writes the former chief of staff-38 S.P. Ivanov. — It was a regiment of the 71st Infantry Division. And the Kharkov agents, with whom we maintained good contact, reported the arrival of this division there. The 3rd Panzer Division was also located there, and the 23rd Panzer Division began to arrive there (earlier, the 294th Division opposed us). Of course, we reported this data to the front headquarters. They also knew about the build-up of enemy forces, but emphasized that we have a sufficient advantage in the strike directions. In particular, our army in the breakthrough sectors outnumbered the Nazis by 2.6 times in infantry, 1.4 times in artillery, and 1.3 times in tanks. The 28th and 6th armies had more than a twofold advantage.

Directly in the front lines, which from the German side were a chain of fortified strongholds, as of May 12 - the day the Soviet offensive began - the confrontation of forces looked like this:

- two German infantry regiments - 429th (168th infantry regiment), 513th (294th infantry regiment) and part of the 211th (71st infantry regiment) - will be attacked by

'Re71. shashene-Oguzyup ip Smeyep \e {Kper 1939 - 1945. 5. 171 - 172.

? Ivanov S.P. Army headquarters, front-line headquarters. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. -S. 226.

45

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

units of the 28th Army: the 175th Infantry Division, the 169th Rifle Division with the 84th Tank Brigade attached to it, the 244th Rifle Division with the 57th Tank Brigade attached to it, the 13th Guards Rifle Division with the 90th Tank Brigade attached to it;

- two more German regiments - the 530th Infantry Regiment (299th Infantry Regiment), the 514th Infantry Regiment (294th Infantry Division) and part of the 211th Infantry Regiment (71st Infantry Division) - will be attacked by formations of the right wing of the 38th Army : 226th sds 36th brigade, 124th sds 13th brigade 81st sd with 133rd brigade.

The neighbors of the 21st Regiment, which on May 12 occupied a position in the region of Nepokrytaya (now Shestakovo') and Peremoga, at the junction of the 28th and 38th armies, were the 513th (to the north) and the 530th th (south)

infantry regiments. All three regiments held the defense along the Bolshaya Babka River with their front to the east.

On May 12, the famous 13th Guards Rifle Division of Colonel A.I. turned out to be the direct opponents of the 21st 1st Regiment. Rodimtsev (28th Army), with the 90th Tank Brigade of Colonel M.I. Malyshev, and 226th Rifle Division Major General A.V. Gorbатов (38th Army), reinforced by the 36th brigade of Colonel T.I. Tanaschishin.

The advanced units of these Soviet formations were located on the Starosaltovsky bridgehead, between Bolshaya Babka and Seversky Donets, and were preparing to break through the German front.

On May 9, the commander of the 13th Guards. SD Rodimtsev was summoned to a meeting at the headquarters of the South-Western Front to "clarify the combat mission in the upcoming offensive operation." According to Rodimtsev: "Our 28th Army and the flanks of the 21st and 38th Armies adjacent to it were to strike from the area southwest of Volchansk, break through the enemy's defenses and, rapidly developing the offensive, expanding the breakthrough, envelop Kharkov from the north and north-west ... Commander of the Southwestern Front, Marshal of the Soviet Union S.K. Timoshenko dwelled in detail on the tasks of each army participating in the Kharkov operation.

The 28th Army was given the task of breaking through the

Uncovered was renamed Shestakovo in honor of Captain M.D., Hero of the Soviet Union, who died here on May 12, 1942. Shestakov - commander of the 1st tank battalion of the 36th brigade (colonel T.I. Tanaschishin).

46

Konstantin Bykov

the front of the Nazis on the Izbitskoye front - height 196.8 and, having captured the Ternovaya, Bayrak, Kupyevakha area, by the end of the third day of the offensive, reach the Zhuravlevka line, height 204.4, Lipty, Borshchev, Klyuchiki.

The marshal also indicated the task of our 13th Guards Rifle Division. We were to break through the enemy defenses on the Kupyevakha-Dragunovka front, capture the area of Peremoga, Rogachevka, and by the end of the day reach the Krasny Khutor line - Hill 194.5. By the end of the second day, we had to master the heights of 197.2 and 201.2.

During a break from the commander of the 28th Army, General Ryabyshev, I learned that our neighbor on the left would be the 226th Rifle Division of General Gorbатов, on the right - the 244th Rifle Division of Colonel Istomin.

Our division was entrusted with an honorable role: to fight as part of the main grouping of the army and to be the first to strike at the enemy defenses on this sector of the front.

The drama of the forthcoming battle also lay in the fact that the 71st Infantry Division and its commander Hartmann were old opponents of the 13th Guards and its commander Rodimtsev. They clashed in the summer of 1941 near Kiev. The then enemy of the 71st infantry division was the 3rd airborne corps, the 5th brigade of which was commanded by A.I. Rodimtsev - was subsequently reorganized into the 87th Rifle Division, which became the 13th Guards Division on January 19, 1942.

In May 1942, the 13th Guards. The SD consisted of the 34th, 39th and 42nd Guards Rifle Regiments and the 32nd Guards Artillery Regiment. The 39th regiment was commanded by Major I.A. Sam-chuk, who also left us memories of those days:

"In early May, the division received an order from the commander of the 28th Army to prepare for the offensive... Preparing the regiments for the offensive, the division headquarters developed a combat order, in which:

the main task of the division was determined:

"13th Guards Order of Lenin Rifle Division with

'
Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S. 226.

47

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The 90th Tank Brigade, the 7th Guards Artillery Regiment, in cooperation with the 244th and 226th Rifle Divisions, breaks through the defenses of the 126th motorized regiment of the enemy, captures the Krasny, Peremoga, Gordienko, Rogachevka lines, and by the end of the day leaves to the line height 214.3, Ryazanovka, height 212.3.

The division is supported by the 233rd Artillery Regiment of the RGK, the 51st Guards Mortar Regiment and aviation, in accordance with the plan of the Army Headquarters."

According to this order, the 39th Guards Rifle Regiment with two platoons of the 2nd Company of the 8th Guards Separate Engineer Battalion of the division, in cooperation with the tanks of the 90th Tank Brigade and the 42nd Guards Rifle Regiment, was to capture Kupyevakha! and further advance on Peremoga. By the end of the day, the regiment was to take Peremoga (northern), Krasny, having taken the line of height 214.3 with forward detachments.

The 42nd Guards Rifle Regiment with the 24th Separate Guards Mortar Battalion and a half company of the 2nd Company of the 8th Guards Engineer Battalion received the task in cooperation with the tanks of the 90th Tank Brigade, the 39th Guards Rifle Regiment and units of the 226th 1st Infantry Division to capture Dragunovka, Gordienko, Rogachevka. Then the regiment was to advance on Ryazanovka and by the end of the day reach the Ryazanovka line, height 194.5, with forward detachments in the area of height 212.3, a grove to the east of the height. The 34th Guards Rifle Regiment was in the second echelon of the division, "writes I.A. Samchuk.

As can be seen from the order quoted by the commander of the 39th regiment Samchuk, the enemy of the 13th Guards. on May 12, there was only one 126th motorized regiment of the enemy. On the map of combat operations of the 71st Infantry Division, in addition to the German infantry regiments already indicated by us, in the area of the strip on

On the night of May 11-12, the 211th regiment of the 71st division was

replaced by the 513th regiment of the 294th infantry division. 2 Samchuk I.A. Thirteenth Guards. - M., 1962. - S. 83 - 84.

48

Konstantin Bykov

steps of the 13th Guards. sdi 226th sd is a part of the German 126th rifle brigade (1 VI.5 s. Vpe.126), part of the artillery of the 71st infantry division and its sapper units. In all likelihood, in both cases (both in the order for the 13th Guards Rifle Division and in the history of the 71st Infantry Division), it refers to the 126th Infantry Regiment of the 23rd German Infantry Brigade, which was part of composition of the 23rd Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht. However, the map we are talking about reflects the situation on May 18th. As for May 12, neither on the maps of Glantz, nor on the German maps, nor on the Soviet post-war research schemes, the 126th motorized regiment is recorded in this area. In other words, the 13th Guards Division began its offensive blindly, without any idea of the actual state of affairs. Rodimtsev himself in his book names the 164th German regiment among the opponents opposing him, about which he became aware already at the beginning of the battles. Obviously, we are talking about the 164th Infantry Regiment, which in February 1942 was transferred from the 62nd to the 57th Infantry Division, in exchange for the 179th Infantry Regiment. The presence of units of the 164th regiment in the northern area of operations is not confirmed by other sources. Commander A large number of those found - 13th Guards. sd

A.I. Rodimtsev. The presence in the offensive zone of the 28th and 38th armies of "unrecorded" regiments and battalions from a wide variety of German formations speaks of the "porridge" that reigned among the Germans on this sector of the front. On the map we have already mentioned from the history of the 71st Division, the 13th Panzer Division is also marked in the combat area, which in May could not be located northeast of Kharkov. However, let's not forget that Kharkov was the largest German rear base, where a large number of military personnel of the group were on vacation and treatment.

49

, 2%

th B

oe \$ › „Cherady“ RO amna -- 2

6 m: uk. Oh squirrel", >

E g - —.

u » va

dec

MaVzha O and B

Map from the history of the 71st Infantry Division.

50

Konstantin Bykov

armies of the South. Armament bases, logistical support and repair organizations were also located here. Vacationers, convalescents, teams that arrived in Kharkov to receive spare parts and weapons - all this could end up at the front during the critical days of the Soviet offensive for the Germans.

Based on the order for the 13th Guards. sd, we can assume that in reality, on the day the Soviet offensive began, reliable information about the enemy, about parts of the 71st infantry division, about the close location of the forces of the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions, about the regiments of the 294th and 168 th pd, the Soviet command had no information about other German units and subunits in the zone of the upcoming offensive. The task was to "break through the defenses of the 126th enemy motorized regiment" with the forces of the 13th Guards Rifle Division, 90th Tank Brigade, 7th Guards Artillery Regiment, 233rd Artillery Regiment of the High Command Reserve, 51st Guards Mortar Regiment and aviation, in cooperation with the 244th and 226th rifle divisions looked almost like childish entertainment.

"The underestimation of the enemy's forces also caused great harm to the cause," wrote afterwards the commander of the army-38 K.S. Moskalenko. — This peculiarity in the activities of the military councils of the South-Western direction and the front, which left a noticeable imprint on the decisions they make even in winter, has now manifested itself even more sharply. I happened to run into her shortly before the start of the offensive.

On this day, I arrived at the command post of the front to report on the signs of compaction of the enemy's battle formations and the significant strengthening of the front line of his defense.

The fact is that, taking back part of the bridgehead behind the Seversky Donets, I saw big changes there on the front line of the enemy. Two weeks ago, when we handed over to the 21st Army! this site, the enemy located here only

Soon the 21st Army will transfer this sector to the 28th Army, and the 28th will return part of it to the 38th Army.

51

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

strongholds in the villages. Now, in addition to the previously existing ones, many new ones appeared, and they were equipped not only in settlements, but also outside them, at tactically advantageous lines.

These observations supplemented the intelligence data. From them it was clear that, for example, another infantry regiment had been advanced to the sector of the 294th Infantry Division, which was defending in the zone of the forthcoming offensive of the 38th Army. He belonged to the 71st Infantry Division, whose main forces, together with the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions, had concentrated by that time in Kharkov.

Parts of the 38th Army had already encountered one of these tank divisions, the 3rd, during the March battles for the expansion of the Starosaltovsky bridgehead on the western bank of the Seversky Donets. Then she dealt us an unexpected and extremely dangerous blow.

As already noted, we had to make a lot of efforts to eliminate its consequences. And now - I had no doubts ABOUT THIS - it was not without reason that the 3rd Panzer Division, and even together with the 23rd Panzer and 71st Infantry Divisions, concentrated in Kharkov, in the immediate vicinity of the battle arena?, in the direction of the upcoming strike of the 38th Army.

In the light of all these conclusions and assumptions, my recent enthusiasm for our superiority has subsided. It presented itself

Troop Commander

38th Army K.S. Moskalenko was insignificant to me in the strip on - in the post-war years. entry into in general and clearly doubt

1 Not the entire 294th Infantry Division was in the zone of the 38th Army, but only one of its regiments - the 514th.

. Before the start of the offensive, Moskalenko's army was separated from Kharkov by only 28-30 km, Ryabyshev's army by 30-35 km.

52

Konstantin Bykov

telny on a number of sites. If confirmed, I thought, my observations regarding the significant strengthening of the enemy's defenses and the mission of the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions, then, for example, in the 38th Army zone, the preponderance of forces could not be on our side.

May 11 - 12. The 211th regiment of the 71st division and its enemy before the battle and in the battle. "With the exception of irregular sabotage activities, harassing infantry and artillery fire, as well as the appearance of patrol and combat groups of the enemy, then we can assume that the enemy behaved relatively calmly on this sector of the front until [May 1," continues the chronicle of the 71st Infantry Division. . - It was foreseen in advance that on the night of May 11-12 the regiment would be relieved. On May 13, he was supposed to be at the location of his 71st division. However, just during the shift, a massive Russian offensive began, using terrifying masses of infantry and tanks. The German front wavered. Parts of the regiment, which had already managed to change, immediately took up cut-off positions east of Peremoga. Although the first onslaught was held, it became clear that holding the position with such few forces would be short-lived. Large masses of infantry and strong tank detachments put pressure on the positions. In this struggle, the commander of the 1st battalion, Major Hertel (Netse)), died.

All large enemy masses penetrate the place of invasion and move forward to the west. There is a big confusion. The 3rd Battalion, which is already on the march of the 71st Infantry Division, was stopped and thrown towards the invasion site. And again, the regiment, with its still existing forces, had to occupy cut-off and defensive positions in order to prevent further advance of the enemy forward. At the same time, he suffered very high losses.

'
Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 183. (It is doubtful that Moskalenko knew about the presence of these divisions before the start of the fighting.)

53

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

While 1.V.211, located at 294.1.0., was fighting, all units of the 71st Infantry Division arrived in the Kharkov region.

And here is how the entry into the Kharkov battle of the 211th regiment was seen by our eyes:

"On the night of May 12, the regiments took up their starting position for the offensive," I.A. Samchuk. - The fascist German command, unaware of the impending strike in this direction, was changing the 295th Infantry Division at that time? parts of the 71st Infantry Division, which arrived from France. The leading edge of the German defenses was, as usual, intensively illuminated by rockets all night.

At dawn, Soviet troops began artillery preparation. The enemy's firing points were attacked by aviation, artillery and mortars. Under machine-gun fire were taken all the trenches and communications of the German infantry.

At 7 o'clock from the observation posts of the division and regiments, a signal was given to go on the attack. Guardsmen quickly broke into the front line of the enemy. A fierce fight ensued.

From powerful artillery and aviation training, parts of the 295th and 71st German infantry divisions suffered heavy losses.

The 71st division of the enemy has more than once experienced the force of the blows of the guardsmen. Having passed in a victorious march through all of France and Poland, in the summer of 1941 she appeared near Kiev, where on August 8 she first encountered units of the 3rd Airborne Corps. The vaunted division, having fallen under the blow of the paratroopers, suffered such losses that it was sent to France for reorganization.

The fascist German command, taking advantage of the absence of a second front in Europe in the spring of 1942, sent most of its reserves to the Soviet-German front, including the reorganized 71st Infantry

| O{e71. shamene-B/usyup it Khmetsep U'e {Kper 1939 - 1945. -5. 172.2 This is obviously a mistake. We can talk about the 294th pd.

54

Konstantin Bykov

division. In April, the latter arrived near Kharkov and was again defeated here, and the 211th regiment was almost completely exterminated. On the very first day of the May offensive near Kharkov, the 13th division inflicted a severe defeat on the 313th infantry regiment of the 295th infantry division! and especially the 211th Infantry Regiment of the 71st Infantry Division of the enemy.

The offensive against Peremoga developed successfully. By the end of the day, the enemy defense front was broken through and its units were driven back to the line of Peremoga (northern), Ryazanovka. To develop the emerging success in the direction of Peremoga (southern), Krasny was brought into battle by the 34th Guards Rifle Regiment.

The commander of the 13th Guards Rifle Division, A.I. Rodimtsev:

"On the night of May 12, Barbin? did not sleep before the fight. He is a new man in the division, and a lot depended on the gunners. He did not have time to study the personnel well and therefore he was worried about the outcome of the artillery preparation. I couldn't sleep either - I was worried about all sorts of worries. How will the regiments take their starting position for the offensive? Is the disguise broken? Did the enemy guess our plans? It seemed that the organizational measures were carried out in detail, but my heart was anxious: was anything missed?

During the 11 months of the war, for the first time we were so carefully, in a real way, preparing an offensive operation. The command of the army and the front took an active part in its preparation.

Before the offensive, I phoned the regimental commanders. They were all awake. It was reported that the personnel were having breakfast and receiving additional ammunition, artillery officers

' The 513th regiment belonged to the 294th Infantry Division.

2 Samchuk I.A. Thirteenth Guards. - M., 1962. - S. 84 - 85. 3 Barbin - guards colonel, head of artillery of the 13th Guards. sd.

25

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The troops are at forward observation posts, ready to control fire. The commander of the 90th tank brigade, Malyshev, reported that the materiel was in good order, the tankers were eager to fulfill the order with honor.

At five o'clock in the morning I contacted the army commander, General Ryabyshev, and reported on the readiness of the division's personnel for the offensive.

"Very well," said Dmitri Ivanovich. "Pay special attention to the need to destroy and suppress enemy targets with our artillery and to the simultaneous attack of infantry and tanks.

Then I called my neighbor on the left, General Gorbatov. Our success also depended on the successful actions of his division. We considered the key positions on the way to Kharkov to be two large settlements: Peremoga and Nepokrytaya. Both are located on the road. Consequently, our main task was to break the enemy's resistance at these two points, to open the way to Kharkov.

Somehow, the minutes dragged on especially slowly in anticipation of the start of artillery preparation. I managed to talk to all the regimental commanders and heads of services. The divisional doctor reported that the advanced medical posts and the medical battalion were deployed and ready to receive the wounded, nurses with a supply of medicines and bandages were in the trenches, next to the soldiers, and were also waiting for a signal to attack. Divisional engineer Tuvsky reported that the sappers had made passages in our minefields and were waiting for a signal to take on enemy minefields.

There was even time to have breakfast in a calm atmosphere, although each of us experienced that high nervous and psychological tension that a person experiences only in decisive moments of life.

Twenty minutes before the start of artillery preparation

GV Uncovered (Gorbatov's offensive zone) was the headquarters of the 211th regiment of the 71st infantry division.

56

Konstantin Bykov

Borisov (Chief of Staff of the 13th Guards Rifle Division - Auth.) went to the command post. I went with a group of commanders to the observation point.

The morning was unusually clear and still. The sky in the east was getting thicker and golden. After the recent rains, the top layer of the earth had dried up a little, and from the thick green grass, which together covered the sloping slopes of the ravine, there was a freshness and smell of honey.

Under a hazel bush, in low thickets of grass, a violet grew. I bent down and carefully plucked a delicate clear-blue flower, put it in my palm. The fragile, densely colored petals of the flower looked like the wings of a moth; as if alive, he trembled in the palm of his hand, the gentle, serene herald of spring.

In a few minutes, the roar of shells will be heard throughout the valley ...

Interrupting my thoughts, the commissar remarked: "Blood is shed, and flowers bloom." A wide expanse opened up from the observation post: deep valleys and ravines, forests and groves, heights and black lanes of country roads. To the right stretched the spreading Yandel Balka, nicknamed the "valley of death" (it was shot through by fire from both sides), farther a blue mound, to the south-west a large dark square stood out a grove.

On the horizon, a round height, indicated on the map +2.6, clearly loomed. It was the key to the entire defense of the enemy. At first we decided to make the main attack directly on this height, but two days ago, after a thorough reconnaissance, the original decision was abandoned. There were no convenient approaches to this height, the struggle for it could become lengthy, and this would delay the advance of our left flank.

Therefore, it was necessary to use the more advantageous position of the division on the left flank, in the southeastern part of the village of Dragunovka, and one of the regiments went in the direction of the village of Gordienko, bypassing height +2.6 from the south. At six o'clock in the morning it struck, our rocket artillery roared deafeningly

57

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

ria. The height was covered with a black cloud of dust and smoke. Lightning breaks flashed in the dense moving cloud. Again the roar filled the valley as the rocket artillery regiment fired a second salvo.

Another echo rolled through the yards and dales, when the rumble of engines was heard in the air: squadrons of our bombers and attack aircraft entered the enemy positions.

— Alexander Ilyich! Barbin shouted ecstatically. "Look, the shells of our artillery are exploding exactly at the height. And Kupyevakha is on fire from rocket artillery!"

"Don't hurry to boast, lest you fall off your feet," I told him. "That's when the infantry, together with the tanks, goes on the attack and does not meet fire resistance from the enemy, then we will say "gop"!"

Commissar Zubkov came closer to me:

"Look how our She-2s and attack aircraft work! They are above Peremoga and Uncovered. It's hot there now for the enemy!"

The last minute before the fight expires. The rumble of the planes moved away, the earth froze, quieted down. The maple branch over our NP does not move. Along the entire front, a series of red rockets soared towards the enemy. The radio operators clearly transmit the prearranged signal "777". This is the beginning of the attack.

The rumble and rattle of metal are heard towards the observation post from a sloping valley. The fresh spring wind seems to bring the clang of caterpillars and the rumble of engines closer to us. Malyshev's tankers drive cars at high speeds. Shrouded in blue smoke, the tanks quickly rushed to the positions of the enemy. Behind them, rising to their full height, with a cry of "Hurrah", the infantry moves at an accelerated pace. The cry either rolls over, then becomes muffled, then again comes in a continuous, drawn-out "ah-ah-ah"; intonations of rage and anger are clearly heard in it. |

At that moment, many questions haunted me: have our artillery suppressed enemy firing points? Will the infantry with tanks be able to make a throw into the first trench and destroy the Nazis there before they

58

Konstantin Bykov

come to your senses from an artillery raid? How did the sappers cope with the task - were passages made IN the minefields of the enemy?

I watched the actions of our tanks with paratroopers with particular attention. Here are five heavy vehicles, making a sharp turn, rushed to the enemy artillery firing positions in the Dragunovka area. A fight ensued. The paratroopers fell from the tanks, stretched out in a chain, lay down.

The tanks stopped. Their guns fired almost simultaneously. The volley was repeated a second and a third time. Again, the vehicles at top speed moved to the firing positions of the enemy.

The landing company followed the tanks inseparably. Individual fighters fell, crawled, rose. Others lay motionless. However, the attack continued. The commander's tank was the first to break into the position of the enemy battery.

From the side of the Nazis shots were heard less and less. Finally, they were completely quiet. This means that the enemy battery is suppressed. Now tanks with troops should move to the north, to the rear height.

Somewhat later, Malyshev told the details of this attack. After our artillery preparation and bombing strike, the Nazis had four guns left in this sector of defense. The tanks, firing at direct fire, silenced the enemy battery. Breaking into the battery, the paratroopers destroyed the crews and seized the guns in good working order.

Taking advantage of the success of the tankers, the commander of the rifle company of the 42nd Guards Rifle Regiment Bolotov made the right decision: he raised the company to attack the village of Dragunovka at the moment when the Nazis began to roll back. Firing on the run from small arms, a company of

'According to pre-war maps, two settlements, both with the name Dragunovka, were located 1-2.5 km southwest of Kupyevakha. Today all these settlements, Dragunovka and Kupievakha, have one name - Ukrainka.

59

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

rushed to the village, destroyed the servants with two mortars and one cannon, up to a platoon of enemy infantry.

The division's offensive developed according to a strictly developed plan. However, the laws of war are such that success does not come without pain. Sometimes a small oversight, an inaccurate agreement between interacting subdivisions can lead to unnecessary, downright annoying losses.

When our sappers made passages in the enemy minefield and marked them with pieces of deployed gauze, these markings turned out to be insufficiently noticeable for the tankers. They did not find passages and moved straight through the minefield. Four cars were blown up by mines, three of them burned down. The rest of the tanks slipped through and attacked enemy firing points.

On the scale of the entire battle on the outskirts of Kharkov, this was only an episode, but it should have been remembered and CONCLUSIONS drawn.

The enemy stubbornly resisted all along the front. Later, the captured officers said that they did not even allow the thought that we could break through their defenses. Their firing points, suppressed by our artillery, came to life and continued to fire at our advancing infantry.

Now our soldiers and commanders were convinced that the work expended in preparing the offensive operation was not in vain. Our infantrymen skillfully interacted with tank crews and artillery crews, thanks to which we were able to quickly move forward. The tanks crushed the enemy's machine-gun emplacements, and the infantry, closely following the vehicles, shot down the retreating fascists. An hour after the start of the attack, the regiments of Major Samchuk (39th Guards Regiment) and Colonel Yelin (42nd Guards Regiment), acting in the first echelon of the division, broke the resistance of the German defense. Colonel Yelin reported that the guards of his regiment had liberated the village of Dragunovka and, together with the tanks, were successfully moving forward, capturing large trophies.

60

Konstantin Bykov

However, from the observation post I could see the whole picture of the battle, and I knew that Dragunovka taken by us.

Pavel Ivanovich Yelin also reported that the commander of the 4th rifle company, Ivan Chekaldin, made a profound maneuver: bypassed Dragunovka with one platoon and captured the ammunition depot. Two of his platoons, with the support of machine gunners, attacked a four-gun battery of anti-tank guns, destroyed 18 fascists and, thus, opened the way for our tankers to the west. During these daring actions, only two soldiers of his company were slightly wounded.

The guardsmen of the 5th company of senior lieutenant Pavel Stanislav also acted excellently: they destroyed the crews of two enemy anti-tank guns.

Elin's voice rang with joyful excitement:

— Alexander Ilyich! I now have ten serviceable German anti-tank guns and a lot of NIM ammunition.

I thanked the guardsmen for their skillful fighting and ordered them to immediately use captured weapons against the enemy - cannons, mortars, machine guns, rifles.

The battle flared up. All surroundings of the horizon - gullies, valleys and ravines - were covered with dense and acrid smoke. Whirlwinds of shell explosions kept rising in this tousled blue smoke. Machine guns crackled incessantly. The anti-tank guns fired piercingly and sharply. Our tankers and infantrymen confidently moved forward.

At about one o'clock in the afternoon, Major Samchuk reported that the guardsmen of his regiment had completely cleared the settlement of Kupyevakha from the Nazis. |

I ordered him to bring the second echelon of the regiment into battle and, together with the tankers, advance in the direction of the village of Peremoga.

I will not hide the fact that for the first time in the long eleven months of the war, I felt so completely and deeply a sharp, exciting joy. All our warriors were captured by a common joyful impulse.

Commissar Zubkov, clenching his fists, whispered in a barely audible voice:

- Forward! Only forward, and as quickly as possible ...

61

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

... I called Borisov and ordered the regiment of Filipp Alekseevich Trofimov (34th Guards Rifle Division) to be prepared for entry into battle.

Now before us was the only task: to go forward, not to let the enemy come to his senses, to beat him continuously. By rapidly building up forces from the depths of the division's battle formation, we could rapidly build on the success of the first echelon regiments and resolutely move on Kharkov.

The Nazis tried to counterattack. Backed by tanks! the enemy battalion of the 515th Infantry Regiment (regiment of the 294th Infantry Division. - Auth.) moved into a "psychic" attack. Our soldiers managed to dig deep cracks, let the enemy tanks pass and cut off the infantry from them. The German battle was almost completely destroyed. Other enemy battalions also suffered heavy losses, especially the 1st battalion of the 164th regiment.

By evening, the division had successfully completed the task assigned to it. Our losses were 90 killed and wounded. Most of the tanks knocked out by the enemy were quickly restored, and in a day or two they were back in service.

On this sector of the front, the Nazis were actually defeated. We captured more than 80 soldiers and officers, captured 43 guns, 15 mortars, 8 light machine guns, 7 walkie-talkies, 40 horses, three large ammunition depots, two storage depots and more.

On this day, the settlements of Kupyevakha, Dragunovka, Peremoga, Gordienko, many tactically important heights were captured.

The day was dying, the warm evening descended on the earth pitted with shells. The commissar and I walked along the hushed battlefield, bypassing deep craters and even corpses that had not been removed ... "?

' We have not yet found German evidence of the presence of tanks on the first day of the battle in this area. Possibly, we are talking about German improvised — field guns mounted on tank chassis. In the memoirs of one artilleryman of the 71st division, the Germans tried to convert our wrecked KV tank into an artillery tractor.

2 Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S. 227 - 235.

62

Konstantin Bykov

And what was happening at that time in the direction of Nepokryatnaya, where the main forces of the 2111th regiment of the 71st division were located? |

In the direction of this settlement, the left (southern) neighbor of the 13th Guards was advancing. SD - 226th Infantry Division of the 38th Moskalenko Army. Since October 1941, this division was commanded by brigade commander A.V. Gorbatov (since December - major general). His wife's father and brother were repressed. And when in 1937 (according to other sources - in 1938) Gorbatov himself was arrested, A.I. Eremenko! not afraid to help his wife. To provide open assistance to a family member of "numerous traitors to the Motherland", two of whom have already been shot... Here, perhaps, everything is clear and without comment regarding Eremenko's act. It should only be added to this that S.M. Budyonny...

"... I often visited my right neighbor," recalled Gorbatov, "an excellent comrade and strong-willed combat commander of the 13th Guards Rifle Division A. I. Rodimtsev, and he, in turn, visited us. We discussed the situation that had arisen, exchanged views on work in divisions, and sometimes rested at chess. I talked about the March events in 1917, about the death of three of our infantry divisions in the bridgehead across the Stokhid River. Then the Germans first destroyed all crossings on the river, and then, using a lot of artillery and gases, after the third attack they captured the bridgehead.

Then the Germans did not warn leaflets about the upcoming offensive, I told Rodimtsev, but now they do. It looks like they don't have the strength to attack here. Still, we can't sit idly by: who knows if they'll try to throw us into the river??

Before receiving 15 years in prison and camps plus 5 years of disqualification, A.V. Gorbatov was the deputy commander of the 6th Cavalry Corps. The corps commanders under Gorbatov were successively G.K. Zhukov and A.I. Eremenko.

2 The backs of the soldiers of the 226th and 13th divisions were the Seversky Donets.

63

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

And we did a lot of work to strengthen our defenses, improved the fire system. Divisional artillery, withdrawn to the eastern coast, was in the highest readiness to open fire, regimental artillery was put on direct fire to fire at tanks. Using a system of observation posts raised to the tops of trees, we tried to look through the depth of the enemy's defenses and see what he carefully hides from us: in the defense of the bridgehead! it is especially important that the enemy does not attack suddenly.

We assigned four people to the observation posts, one of them senior. These people did not change daily, but were assigned to a certain sector for ten days. They were taught to memorize the area well and check every morning to see if there had been any changes during the night. The observers were on duty around the clock, changing every hour or two (including the senior one). In the notebook of observations, they recorded what they saw and heard day and night ...

1] May 1942, we were preparing for a big offensive.

After a harsh winter, spring in the south began early: at the end of April, grass appeared in the meadows, then the forest was covered with leaves, and now the bird cherry was in full bloom.

Artillery preparation was scheduled for 06:00, and the offensive began at 07:30. Considering that the day would be hard - it was difficult to say when and where the fighters would get a break - we gave instructions: to feed people with dinner until 20:00, put people to bed at 21:00 and provide everyone with nine hours of sleep, wake up at 6 in the morning, from the beginning of artillery preparation, and before seven to distribute a hearty breakfast.

In the evening, they fed the fighters dinner and ordered them to sleep.

As always before a fight, trying to cope with the inevitable excitement, I mentally checked whether everything was planned. In these cases, you want to be alone. I walked back and forth

' This refers to the Starosaltovskiy bridgehead northeast of Kharkov, between the Seversky Donetsk and Bolshaya Babka.

64

Konstantin Bykov

through the forest, where the 985th rifle regiment is located. The evening was very warm. Passing through the disposition of the battalions, I saw that everyone was lying, hugging their weapons, but no one was sleeping; some whispered softly to a neighbor. How familiar I am with these soldier's thoughts before an offensive! Some people think about their loved ones, about relatives, others think about whether they will be alive tomorrow, still others scold themselves for not having time or forgot to write the necessary letter ...

... From four o'clock I was on my feet and again walked through the forest. It was already light, but everyone slept soundly, even though the birds chirped in all voices. The first time I was angry with them was this early morning in May, especially the ones who sang loudly. I was afraid that they would wake up the soldiers, who probably fell asleep just before dawn - they needed to sleep at least an hour more.

"Nightingales, nightingales, do not disturb the soldiers..." It was not by chance that this beautiful song appeared, so faithfully responding to the experiences of front-line soldiers.

At the NP of the division, my deputy Lieutenant Colonel Likhachev reported that everything was READY, the clocks were checked, there were five minutes left.

Exactly at six o'clock all the barrels of the artillery spoke in unison. While the artillery preparation was going on, the soldiers were raised, fed. miles of hearty breakfast. At seven thirty minutes we went on the offensive and captured Hill 199.0, the main German stronghold that covered the village of Nepokrytoye. By sixteen o'clock the Uncovered was in our hands.

Combat operations of the 7th Infantry Division and its subunits on the first and subsequent days of the May battle near Kharkov took place in a square with a side of about 20x20 km. The most generalized picture of the events taking place in this area was given to us by the commander of the troops of the 38th Army, K.S. Moskalenko:

"The offensive of the northern shock group (i.e., the 21st, 28th and 38th armies. - Auth.) began on May 12 at 6 a.m. 30 min. artillery

| The 226th Rifle Regiment consisted of the 985th, 987th and 989th Rifle Regiments. 2 Gorbатов A. V. Years and wars. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1965. - S. 210 - 213.

3 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 65

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

lerian training. It lasted exactly one hour. At 7 o'clock. 30 min. went on the attack infantry with tanks of direct support. At the same time, aviation began a raid lasting 15-20 minutes on areas of artillery positions and strong points of the enemy in his main line of defense.

A significant number of firing points could not be suppressed. In addition, there were much more of them than expected, and this was the first surprise for our troops. As a result, rifle subunits and tanks of the first echelons of the 21st, 28th and 38th armies were met with dense fire. This was followed by counterattacks by the tactical reserves of the enemy. In the first half of the day, the attacking units were able to advance to the depth of | | up to 3 km.

The second surprise was that, contrary to hopes, the 28th Army advanced least of all. She had, as shown above, more forces and means than the 21st (General V.N. Gordov. - Auth.) and 38th armies. However, in the course of the fighting it became clear that the enemy, too, had created a high tactical density of defense in the offensive zone of the 28th Army. This, in turn, showed that the German fascist command knew about our offensive'. Surprise, as the most important element of any battle, was lost by our troops. Heavy, bloody battles were to be waged.

By the end of the first day of the offensive, the 21st and 38th armies achieved the best results in battle. Troops of these armies, having a density of artillery and tanks on 1 km of the front, smaller than the 28th Army, achieved great success ...

The 226th Rifle Division of Major General A.V. Gorbatov, reinforced by the 36th tank brigade (commander Colonel T.I. Tanaschishin). She quickly broke through the tactical depth of the Nazi defense and then proceeded to pursue the defeated units of the 294th and 211th regiments of the 71st infantry divisions. After short

The defectors informed the Germans about the arrival of the 28th Army at the front.

? In our opinion, on the first day of the battle, the adjacent divisions of the 28th and 38th armies achieved the greatest success: the 13th Guards Rifle Division of Rodimtseva and the 226th Rifle Division of Gorbatov.

66

Konstantin Bykov

In a fast-paced battle, the 226th Rifle Division captured an important enemy resistance center in the settlement of Nepokrytoye, advancing 10 km in a day

By the beginning of the Soviet offensive, as already noted, one regiment of the 71st Infantry Division was transferred to the sector against the 38th Army. A regiment of the 297th Infantry Division also arrived here at the very beginning of the battle: It was part of the reserve of the 51st Army Corps, which defended the Chuguevsky bridgehead-z.

The command of the 6th German army was alarmed. It believed that here, and not south of Kharkov, the main blow was delivered. This direction was recognized as threatening, so two more regiments were transferred here - from the 71st and 44th infantry divisions*. In addition, by the end of the day, the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions, which were in the army reserve, began to concentrate in the army offensive zone? and destined, as we very soon saw, to carry out

active tasks.

The results of the first day of the offensive as a whole did not justify the hopes of the front command. I considered it necessary, in order to achieve success, to shift the direction of the main attack to the zone of our army. The fact that the 226th Rifle Division broke through the tactical depth of the enemy's defense

Until Kharkov remained 20 — 22 km. In the March operation, the 226th Rifle Division approached Kharkov at 10-12 km.

? According to David Glantz's album of maps of the Battle of Kharkov, this was the 522nd Regiment. The 297th infantry regiment also included the 523rd and 524th infantry regiments.

3 To the south of the Soviet Starosaltovsky bridgehead, slightly protruding to the west between the Seversky Donetsk and Bolshaya Babka, was the German Chuguevo Balakleysky bridgehead strongly advanced to the east. To the south of this German bridgehead was the Soviet Barvenkovsky bridgehead, deeply advanced to the west. All these Soviet and German bridgeheads were equally convenient for encircling the enemy, and dangerous for themselves.

4 The 131st Regiment of the 44th Infantry Division and the 191st Regiment of the 71st Division ended up in this area by accident, which we will see from the further history of the 71st Infantry Division.

> As we saw from the order to attack the 13th Guards. SD, units of the 23rd Panzer Division (126th Regiment) were at the forefront.

67

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

“>

ka, it was supposed to greatly facilitate the defeat of the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions, and then the encirclement and liquidation of the entire Kharkov enemy grouping.

These considerations were reported to the commander of the front. However, he did not agree with them, declaring that success would be more significant in the former direction, since both flanks were reliably covered there. The commander considered the fears regarding the concentration of large tank forces by the enemy to be insufficiently substantiated. This threat, in his opinion, was to be eliminated by the success of the troops in the direction of the main attack, i.e., in the sector of our 6th Army. |

The military council of the front came to the conclusion that the operation should continue in the future in accordance with the previously adopted decision and in the previous grouping. He believed that a decisive offensive by the 28th Army would ensure the defeat of the opposing enemy troops by the morning of the next day. When the enemy's resistance was thus broken, the front headquarters believed, our troops would rush to the west and encircle the enemy grouping. As regards the two panzer divisions concentrated in the offensive zone of the 38th Army, no measures were envisaged to defeat them or even parry possible counterattacks. I was only ordered to withdraw the tank brigades from the battle and concentrate them by the morning of the next day to cover the Starosaltovskaya direction, which could not be considered a sufficiently effective measure. Especially since in the same area the enemy was completing the concentration of three fresh infantry regiments, which we learned about only the next day.

Chief of Staff of the South-Western Front and South-Western Front I.Kh. Bagramyan is so pro-

’
Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 186 - 189. The fresh regiments that Moskalenko writes about were the result of an unfinished planned change of German units in the forefront. The offensive of the Soviet troops on May 12 began at a very favorable moment, on the one hand, during the change of German units. But on the other hand, this moment was also extremely unfavorable - the number of German troops in the forward positions was double.

68

Konstantin Bykov

Moskalenko commented on these words: “Giving the commander of the 38th Army, General K.S. Moskalenko an order to withdraw the formations of the 22nd tank corps from the battle in order to prepare them for parrying the expected tank ram of the enemy, Marshal S.K. Timoshenko hoped that the army commander would be able to successfully repel the expected blow with the skillful use of the corps, available artillery and engineering equipment. After all, General Moskalenko was considered by us to be a great specialist in the fight against enemy tanks.

However, we are getting a little ahead of ourselves. The fact that on the next day of the Kharkov operation, on May 13, under the breath of the most successful divisions of the armies of Moskalenko and Ryabyshev, two enemy tank divisions would strike at once, no one knew yet ...

May 6 - 20, 1942. The main forces of the 71st Infantry Division in the Battle of Kharkov. Since the regiments of the 71st and 44th German infantry will be mixed during the Battle of Kharkov, we will need to briefly return to the sinister role that the 44th shashchepe-P / u played in the two previous Kharkov failures of the Soviet troops. !\$10lp.

In 1942, there were three Kharkov operations: January, March and May itself, which and this book is dedicated.

The first offensive Kharkov operation - Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya - was carried out in January 1942 and failed. Although the front of the fascist troops was broken through, it was not possible to liberate Kharkov. As a result of this operation, the Soviet troops formed a dangerous (both for the Germans and for us) Barvenkovsky bridgehead. The throat, or mouth, of this bridgehead was: in the north - Balakleya, in the south - Slavyansk. The distance between these two points, which were in the hands of the Germans, was about 75 km. A very dangerous distance for the Soviet troops from the point of view of the German tank and aviation potential.

! Bagramyan I.D. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1977. - S. 90.

69

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The second offensive Kharkov operation - "little known" - was carried out in March 1942. The 6th and 38th armies of the South-Western Front were to destroy the Chuguev-Balakleyevsky grouping of the enemy and take Kharkov. The task was not completed. It was not possible to knock out the Nazis from Balakleya. The "noose" of Balakleya-Slavyansk continued to put pressure on the throat of the Soviet troops...

In all these offensive operations, the Balakleya area was defended by the 44th Infantry Division of the 51st Army Corps of the 6th German Army of Paulus.

In January, they could not be driven out of Balakleya by the formations of the right wing of the 6th army of A.M. Gorodnyansky: the 253rd rifle division of brigade commander A.A. Neborak with the dowry of the 13th Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel I.T. Klimenchuk, 337th Infantry Division of Colonel S.M. Bushev, with the 7th Tank Brigade of Colonel I.A. Yurchenko, part of the forces of the 411th Infantry Division, Colonel M.A. Pesochin and the 6th Cavalry Corps, Major General A.F. Bychkovsky (the corps, by the time it received the order to help in the capture of Balakleya, had neither ammunition, nor food, nor fodder; its transport and the 5th Guards Tank Brigade were without fuel). The left wing of the 38th Army, Major General of the Technical Troops A.G. Maslov, the predecessor of K.S. Moskalenko as commander-38.

In the March offensive operation of the 6th (A.M. Gorodnyansky) and 38th (K.S. Moskalenko) armies, the Soviet troops again failed to encircle and destroy the enemy's Chuguev-Balakleev grouping, consisting of units of 44 th and 297th divisions of the Wehrmacht. The Balakleya area was defended by the same 44th Infantry Division.

On May 12, 1942, the third offensive Kharkov operation began. And we again give the floor to the chroniclers of the 71st "Lucky" Infantry Division:

"On May 6, the division was subordinated to [4.A.K. (51st Army Corps). P1. -IN AND. divisions (sapper battalion), subordinate

Go

Konstantin Bykov

water cell

J \ 2 sd 7% , E m xpoints 9

< Zita ® "3 (2) .

WE

i k in seo

SH g su" seven

Etdo! 4eg 44. p Ohm. from obegep Oopeh |

wop-Mog 1942 ibievenio Yu.1241-Yul.42; for from 16.1.42

44th Infantry Division in the Balakleya area. January - May 1942

44.1.O. (44th Infantry Division), immediately sent to restore the crossings! at Balakliya.

In order to win favorable starting positions on the Donets and Oskol, a number of operations had to be undertaken, since the Russian winter offensive had created such a front line from which it was hardly possible to start a major operation. On May 18, the 1st Tank Army and the 17th Army from the south, and the 6th Army from the north were to launch an offensive operation against the enemy invasion area south of Kharkov (i.e. against the Barvenkovsky bridgehead . - Auth.).

This project was thwarted on 12 May by a massive Russian offensive in the area east and southeast of Kharkov. German and Allied? divisions, which since May 9

'
The restoration of the crossings was necessary for the implementation of the German offensive operation "Friederikus-1" - the tightening of the Balakley-Slavic "stranglehold".

The Kharkov "battle of the nations" involved Italian, Romanian, Hungarian, Croatian, Slovak and Walloon troops.

71

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

engaged in regrouping, were partially crushed, and partially driven back by strong tank formations and Timoshenko's armies.

The 71st Infantry Division, which at that time was on the march with its main forces in the direction of Liman, where, having replaced the 44th Infantry Division in the Grakovo-Zmiev sector, it was supposed to take the starting position for Operation Fridericus, received a new order. She was supposed to follow to Babka, east of Kharkov, in order to change 23.R7.Rum there. (23rd Panzer Division). The division immediately sent to the north. The 194th Infantry Regiment of the 71st Infantry Division, which had already succeeded in replacing the 131st Infantry Regiment of the 44th Infantry Division in sector 44.1.O, remained in its positions and was subordinated to 44.1.O. In turn, the 131st regiment of the 44th division was subordinated to the 71st division.

To the north of Kharkov, the enemy reached the Veseloe-Liptsy area. "To block this Russian breakthrough, the 23.R7.RUm located in Babka and unit 71.1.O are advanced. Under heavy enemy air raids, the change of units was carried out, and the division prepared for defense .

On May 16, the enemy launched strong attacks, supported by numerous tanks, on Nepokrytaya (on May 12 Nepokrytaya was taken by the 226th Rifle Division of Gorbатов and the 36th Tank Brigade of Tanaschishin?, on May 3 it was lost, on the night of May 14 it was taken again, and on the morning of May 14, unable to withstand the blow of the 23rd TD and units

71st Infantry Division, Gorbатов and Tanaschishin withdrew to Bolshaya Babka; On May 15, the 13th Guards Rifle Division could have been active near Uncovered

From now on, the 71st Infantry Division consisted of its own 191st and "foreign" 131st paragraphs, and the 44th Infantry Division consisted of its own 132nd and 134th paragraphs and a "foreign" 194th paragraph. The 211th division of the 71st division was still located with the 294th division. Moreover, one of the battalions of the 211th regiment acted in isolation from the main forces of the regiment. This disorder contributed to our offensive, but it was necessary to attack very quickly, without giving the Nazis time to reorganize.

By the end of May 14, Veseloye was captured by the 169th Rifle Division of Colonel S.M. Rogachevsky with the support of the 84th brigade, Colonel D.N. Bely (connections of the 28th army of D.I. Ryabyshev).

3 At the same time, the commander of the 1st tank battalion, Captain M.D., was killed. Shestakov.

72

Konstantin Bykov

and 90th brigade; On May 16, no one attacked Uncovered, on the contrary, the 23rd and 71st Infantry Divisions attacked the 13th Guards from Uncovered. sd Rodimtseva and given to her by the 57th brigade. - Auth.). All day the enemy artillery and aviation dominated. Only the use of "Pieces"! resulted in a noticeable relief.

On May 17, the enemy broke into the right flank of the division, where the 131st regiment subordinate to it (regiment of the 44th Infantry Division. - Auth.), burst in, historians of the 71st Infantry Division continue. At the same time, the height of 194.5 was lost. The division commander, General von Hartmann (Na(stapp), personally stops the withdrawal of units of 1.K.131, leads them forward again and ensures that the enemy attack is choked. During the day, the regiment manages to take back the lost height and repel several enemy attacks (that day, at a height of 194.5, the 39th Guards Rifle Regiment of I.A. half of the day, unable to withstand the German attack on the height of 2172.3, the 42nd Guards Rifle Regiment of I.P. Yelin withdrew to the height of 194.5 and dug in on its western slope; obviously, this retreating regiment fled located in the height area of the 131st regiment of the 71st (44th) DIVISION. - 46t.).

On May 18, the enemy continues his massive tank offensive. At the same time, the most advanced lines become partially ironed. The Schmidt-Ott (Sepp-OY) battalion, subordinate to the division, from 23.R7.Glu.?, becomes support in the defense against these attacks. The renewed help of the Stukas only partially weakens the enemy pressure.

On May 19, the enemy repeats the tank attack, and his military aviation is especially strong. However, all attacks are successfully repelled. More than 50 enemy tanks and many artillery batteries were destroyed, and the positions were

! "Thing" - dive bomber Yu-87. The meaning of "Stuka" can be judged by the fact that in a small passage from the history of the 71st Infantry Division, which is devoted to the battles near Kharkov, the word "Stuka" is used 18 times.

2 Schmidt-Ott served in the 3rd TD.

73

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

131st regiment in the area of the river Babka.

keep everywhere. The enemy's attempt to break in on May 20 with the support of numerous tanks at the position of 1.V.191 was also unsuccessful. The regiment endures this and prevents a breakthrough.

As can be seen from the quoted passage, the Germans considered themselves the defending side. The Soviet troops considered themselves the same. After May 13, when German tanks hit the northern grouping, the offensive of the Soviet troops began to fade and by May 16 turned into a defense with counterattacks. On May 17, Ryabyshev, and on May 18, Moskalenko really went on the offensive, including on the positions occupied by

'Re71. Tashene-Omyup ip Imeyep U "ekper 1939 - 1945. - \$ 5. 172 - 174.

74

Konstantin Bykov

parts of the 71st Infantry Division. However, this offensive was not successful and ended with the retreat of our armies to their original lines.

During these battles, the main forces of the 71st Infantry Division were assigned as follows (unfortunately, the annals of the division say nothing about this):

1. The 191st and 131st Infantry Regiments of the 71st Infantry Division, together with the 23rd Tank Division from the Mikhailovka area, the 1st, Nepokrytaya and Gordienko, acted against the 13th Guards (28A) and 226th (38A) rifle divisions.
2. The 211th regiment of the 71st division, the 3rd tank division and the 513th regiment of the 294th infantry division, concentrated north of Mikhailovka 1st, acted against the 13th Guards. sdi 244th sd (28A).

Both combat groups, which included units of the 71st Infantry Division, also acted against other Soviet formations, for example, in the area of Vesely and Ternovaya, however, we are talking only about battles in the area of Peremoga and Nepokrytaya, where the Soviet formations were supported by the 90th, 36th and 57th tank brigades. On May 18, the composition of the Soviet grouping in the named area will be changed, about which we will speak later.

As for the 57th tank brigade, it was immediately out of luck. The intensity of the use of German aviation was such that the commander of the 57th tank brigade (perhaps it was Major General V. M. Alekseev) was killed immediately after he arrived with his brigade at the disposal of Rodimtsev on May 15. The words of the commander of the 13th Guards. SD: "Above the battle formations of the Yoelin regiment! an unusual enemy air formation appeared - one hundred planes!"? — are by no means an exaggeration. We will soon find confirmation of this in the history of the 71st Infantry Division. Left without her commander and subordinate I.P. Elina 57th Panzer

! Commander of the 42nd Guards. cn 13th Guards. SD Colonel Ivan Pavlovich Yelin. Rodimtsev in his memoirs sometimes calls Elin Pavel Ivanovich.

2 Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S. 248.

G5

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the brigade, unable to withstand the powerful blow of German aircraft and tanks, began to withdraw, but was stopped at the positions of the 39th Guards. cn major I.A. Samchuk, where fierce tank battles soon broke out. Since the regiments of Samchuk and Yelin concentrated in the area of height 194.5, we can assume that the Soviet tanks mentioned in the history of the 71st Infantry Division in the area of this height and Nepokrytaya could belong to the 57th brigade. At the same time, participation in the battles of tanks of the 90th (attached to the 13th Guards Rifle Division) and the 36th Tank Brigade (attached to the 226th Rifle Division) in the region of height 194.5 is also not excluded.

Height 194.5, which is always mentioned in German and Soviet sources, is located between Peremoga and Nepokrytaya, on the southeastern outskirts of the forest between these settlements and located to the west of Petrovskaya. According to Glantz's album as of May 17th

the height was in the zone of the 1st regiment of the 71st division, to the right of which, i.e. to the south, in the area of \u200b\u200bNepokrytaya, there was the 131st regiment of the 71st (44th) infantry regiment. The enemy of the Germans at a height of 194.5 was the 13th Guards Rifle Division of Rodimtsev. The enemy of the 131st regiment, according to the same map, was the 226th SD of Gorbатов. A Soviet source (a diagram from the 5th edition of the Collection of Military Historical Materials of the Great Patriotic War. - M., 1951) indicates that on May 17, the 226th division of Gorbатов was located east of Nepokrytaya and that the 191st regiment of the 71st pd. True, in this scheme the 131st regiment is not indicated at all.

From the Soviet side, the battles described above in the history of the 71st Infantry Division looked like this:

“From the early morning of May 17, artillery rumbled,” recalled the commander of the 28th Army, Ryabyshev. — After a short artillery preparation, the enemy tanks, accompanied by dense infantry chains, attacked the flank formations of the army. The first attack on the site of the 13th Guards Division was repulsed with significant losses in manpower for the attackers. In front of the front of its units, five armored units stopped and, smoking with a fuming flame, burned out ...

76

Konstantin Bykov

At 1] hours 30 minutes, the German infantry again appeared from Nepokrytnaya, accompanied by 50 tanks. Immediately more than 30 dive bombers appeared in the air. They began to bomb the battle formations of the 13th Guards Division, preventing them from firing at the tanks. The units began to suffer heavy losses in people as well.

Attacked by the enemy from the west, the 34th and 42nd from the south, the 42nd and 39th Guards Rifle Regiments, found themselves in a very difficult situation. 50 enemy tanks that came out of Nepokrytnaya divided into two groups, one with a roar went through the rear of the 42nd Guards to the height of 214.3, which was occupied by the 34th Guards Regiment, the other went to the height of 194.5, occupied by the 39th Guards Regiment .

Colonel A.I. Rodimtsev brought the 90th tank brigade into battle, but only 20 combat vehicles remained in it, and they could not have a decisive influence on the course of the battle. Rodimtsev asked me for fighters against German bombers and attack aircraft for strikes against concentrations of enemy troops near Mikhailovka 2nd, Mikhailovka | and on the march.

The army air force consisted of only 30 fighters, 15 attack aircraft and the same number of bombers. The pilots worked at full capacity in other sections of the army zone in accordance with the instructions received. Nevertheless, I was forced to redirect part of the aircraft of all types for operations in the interests of the 13th Guards Division. This made things a little easier for her.

By 12.30 by the general active efforts of the enemy attacks were repulsed. Units and divisions began to put themselves in order. But the respite did not last long. Half an hour later, infantry and 19 tanks again moved from Nepokrytaya to the positions of the 39th Guards Regiment. Having let the combat vehicles come closer, they were unanimously hit by anti-tank rifles. Four tanks caught fire, the rest turned towards the positions of the 42nd Guards Regiment...

77

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

At [3 hours 20 minutes] infantry with 15 tanks again moved to the defense of the 39th Guards Regiment. And after some time, 45 tanks and infantry came out of Mikhailovka | -th to Nepokrytaya, at a height of 198.5, two kilometers west of Nepokrytaya, this column turned north and hit

flank of the 42nd, and then the 34th Guards Rifle Regiments. And again, about 30 enemy dive bombers hung over their battle formations. The guards bravely repulsed the attack, but the enemy forces were too great. The 34th Guards Regiment left Petrovskoye, height 214.3, and entrenched itself near the grove, on the eastern slope of this height. The 42nd Guards did not resist either; it left Hill 212.3 and secured itself on the western slope of Hill 194.5.

A neighbor on the left (226th Rifle Division Gorbатов. - Auth.), who retreated to the eastern bank of the Babka River, reported that a German infantry regiment was moving from the village of Peschanoe to a height of 199.0, that is, to the location of the 39th Guards Regiment.

And the fight broke out again. Over the site of the 13th Guards, for the umpteenth time, fascist planes appeared in the air. Our fighters and attack aircraft appeared in the air only occasionally due to their small numbers. All actions of our aviation were constrained, it was deprived of the possibility of wide maneuver. Enemy dive bombers constantly hovered over the battlefield and inflicted heavy losses on the battalions.

In the evening, Rodimtsev reported to me the results of the day of fighting.

The 34th Guards Regiment withdrew to Peremoga. The 42nd and 39th Guards Regiments held their positions. Thus, the guards, together with the 90th and 57th tank brigades, withstood the counterattack of two hundred enemy tanks with infantry and a massive air bombardment. They only retreated in some places, burning and damaging 73 tanks and incapacitating up to 500 fascist soldiers.

The next day, May 18, the 71st Infantry Division

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 202 - 203.

78

Konstantin Bykov

encountered relatively fresh Soviet troops in the area of Peremoga-Nepokrytaya. Parts of the 38th (Colonel N.P. Dotsenko) and 162nd (Colonel M.I. Matveev) rifle divisions were introduced into the broken joint between the [3rd Guards and 244th Rifle Divisions]. On May 18-19, the 34th separate motorized rifle brigade (Colonel K.I. Ovcharenko) was thrown into the same area. True, all these formations did not operate in the Peremoga area in their full

composition...

The 1st battalion of the 211th regiment of the 71st division from May 12 to May 22, 1942. The 211th regiment, as we already know, on the night of May 12th was to be replaced in its positions and go to its native 71st division. The Soviet offensive scattered this regiment battalion-by-battalion.

"While May 13-23, the division with units assigned to this sector of the front repels all attacks and attempts to break through the enemy, the 1st battalion 1.V.211, which was in the north at 294.1.0. and a tough struggle, the course of which developed as follows, - the historians report 71st 1.2. - The battalion, which was relieved early in the morning on May 12 and was on the march to take up holiday apartments in Petrovskaya, received a message at about 8 o'clock that the enemy had broken through in the Nepokrytaya area with large tank masses. The battalion immediately took up all-round defense and was attacked by red pilots!. Here the battalion receives an order that it should take up positions east of Petrovskaya along the field road. In a forced march, a forest area 3 km northwest

'
The plan of the Kharkov operation (Operational directive of the Civil Code YuZN No. 00275 dated 04/28/1942) determined the composition of the aviation of the northern group as follows: 21A - 43 IAP, 135 BBP, 596 IBP (20 fighters, 15 night bombers and 12 day bombers), 28 A - RAG-4 (46 fighters, 20 attack aircraft, 17 bombers); 38 A - 164 and 182 IAP, 598 IBP (40 fighters, 14 night bombers). But according to Ryabyshev (28A), the 148th and 273rd fighter and 431st assault aviation regiments operated in his area.

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

down the Uncovered was reached'!. At 13.30, the Uncovered was completely in Russian hands?. The red pilots became quite unceremonious. They were throwing bombs everywhere and firing from airborne weapons. To the east of Nepokrytaya, powerful accumulations of enemy tanks were observed?. The battalion, which had meanwhile been ordered to arrive at Peremoga, was moving through the wooded area east of Petrovskaya. The march to the combat area was hampered by enemy aircraft. Near Peremoga, the battalion met the remnants of the units stationed there, including Hauptmann Stein (Zet) and Lieutenant Schneider (Esppeideg). The victory was abandoned." The situation looked risky. Therefore, the battalion immediately returned and took up positions on the heights east of Petrovskaya. Even at that moment, when the battalion began to dig in, it came under flank fire and was processed by two enemy tanks that approached from the south. Since no defensive weapons were available, there was nothing left to do but to secure as much cover as possible. The tanks flattened the battalion and inflicted significant losses. Several machine guns were crushed by tanks. Since it was pointless to hold these heights further, the battalion left them and gathered in Petrovskaya. By this time, there were 158 people in the battalion, including those who joined him from foreign units.

Petrovskaya (now Petrovka) is located 10 km west of Peremoga. The road in question runs along the western edge of the forest, from north to south, from Vesely to Mikhailovka.

2? Filed by A.V. Gorbatov, commander of the 226th Rifle Division, his division took Nepokrytaya by 1600.

3 These could be tanks of the 36th Tank Brigade, which was attached to the 226th Rifle Division. Not far, to the south, the 124th Rifle Division was advancing with the attached 13th Tank Brigade. To the north of the 36th brigade was the 90th brigade, attached to the 13th Guards. sd.

s Peremoga was in the offensive zone of the 13th Guards. sd A.I. Rodimtsev. This settlement was taken by the 39th Guards. cn I.A. Samchuk with the support of the 90th brigade, Lieutenant Colonel M.I. Malyshev. To develop success in this direction, Rodimtsev brought into battle the 34th Guards Rifle Regiment, which finally broke the resistance of the German Peremoga. Losses of the 90th brigade: eight T-60s, four KVs and four T-34s (see: Ryabyshev D.I. The first year of the war. - M.: Voenizdat, 1990. - P. 187).

Konstantin Bykov

Early in the morning of May 13, the battalion took up a circular defense to the west of Petrovskaya. There was no connection with the neighbors, and the battalion was left to its own devices. However, the enemy did not use his breakthrough and did not repeat the blow. During the day, several anti-tank and infantry guns made their way to the battalion and helped reinforce the all-round defense. Large masses of Russians constantly seeped into Petrovskaya. By evening, the enemy attacks the all-round defense of the battalion. The attack was repulsed. At night, the enemy behaved calmly, but early in the morning he continued his attacks with full force.

"From the morning of May 13, the battles unfolded with renewed vigor," recalled the commander of the 39th regiment of the 13th guards division, I.A. Samchuk. — By 4 p.m., the division had liberated nine settlements. At the end of the day, the 34th regiment fought for Petrovskoye, the 42nd regiment captured the height of 212.3 and the grove to the east of the height, and the 39th regiment, withdrawn to the second echelon, advanced behind the battle formations of the 42nd regiment. .. |

By 7 p.m. on May 13, the regiments of the 13th division reached the nearest approaches to Kharkov. "In the meantime, reconnaissance established that the Germans began to bring up reinforcements from the city: large tank groups were advancing towards the advancing formations of the 28th Army

enemy? Having assessed the situation, the headquarters of the 28th Army gave the order to the units of the 13th Division by the end [May 3, go on the defensive. According to this order, the 34th regiment entrenched itself in the Petrovsky area, the 42nd regiment took up defense with a front to the south along the mound line with a mark of +2.0 and a height of 213.3; 39th regiment, having entered

GOe71. brown-haired-Omzyup ip Imeyep U'eKKpee 1939 - 1945. PoCher. — 5.175.

2 From the positions indicated by Samchuk to Kharkov, 16-20 km remained.

3 According to the commander of the division Rodimtsev, intelligence, who visited Kharkov itself, reported that the Germans had no reinforcements, that the path to the city was completely open. The first message about the tanks was sent by Major General A.V. Gorbatov and Colonel A.K. Berestov, commanders of the 226th and 124th divisions of the 38th guards sd. That is, we are not talking about a counter, but about a German flank strike.

81

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

operational subordination of the commander of the 28th Army, prepared the defense at the line of Peremoga, Gordienko, covering the junction between the 28th and 38th armies.

Having a lot of information about the events, division commander-13 A.I. Rodimtsev said the following about the day of May 13:

"Knowing that on the morning of May 13 we will resume the attack on Kharkov, I ordered to organize reconnaissance at night. Judging by the testimonies of the prisoners, the Nazis regarded our offensive as an operation undertaken only with the aim of improving the defensive positions. At the very least, the German command did not consider it necessary to send reinforcements to those troops that opposed us in the areas of the settlements of Krasny and Ryazanovka-.

In the morning, after a fire artillery raid, the division went on the offensive. The 34th Guards Regiment attacked the village of Krasny and, after a heated battle, captured serviceable guns from the Nazis. Following along with the tanks, our infantrymen broke into the settlement of Petrovskoye and cleared it of the enemy.

"Things are going on, Alexander Ilyich!" Borisov shouted on the phone. "Our 42nd regiment has already broken into Ryazanovka and is pushing the enemy out of there.

Events developed rapidly. Already by 12 o'clock the division had completed its task. I contacted the commander of the 28th Army, Ryabyshev, and reported that we had reached the target line, capturing 38 guns, 4 ammunition depots, two warehouses with clothing items, several thousand shells and a lot of cartridges. In addition to 74 German soldiers and officers, Hitler's toadies-polizei were captured by us.

"Very well," Ryabyshev replied. - Now you must temporarily gain a foothold on the reached line.

' Samchuk I.A. Thirteenth Guards. - M., 1962. - S. 85, 88.

2 Krasny and Ryazanovka were located west of Peremoga, in the forest between Peremoga and Petrovskaya (Petrovka). On the current maps in this area are the Krasny Yar gully and the Dolzhik tract. It was reckless to draw conclusions about German countermeasures based on the testimony of captured soldiers and policemen.

82

Konstantin Bykov

I'm a bit taken aback:

- Settling in again? But the road to Kharkov is open!

"I understand, Rodimtsev," the commander said after a pause. - I can't wait either. But the situation is developing in such a way that you need to gain a foothold. In two days of fighting, you have moved 30 kilometers forward. That's good... But now it's time to look around, pull up reserves, sort out the situation.

He repeated:

- Stay strong and stay strong!

I remembered the recent meeting in Kupyansk. How confident we were that Kharkov would soon be liberated!

And now, when the opportunity has arisen to enter the city, while the Nazis are seized with panic, to beat them, as they say, in the tail and mane, we are ordered to temporarily gain a foothold on the reached line!

At this time, our cavalry reconnaissance returned from the enemy rear. Excited and agitated, squadron commissar Alexei Lukashov ran into the headquarters building:

- Comrade Colonel, allow me...

- Report.

His eyes sparkled, his hands twitched nervously.

"We visited behind the front in the settlements of Cherkasskoye, Tishki!, Tsirkuny, Bollypaya Danilovka...

- They've come a long way. Well done!

He took a deep breath and almost shouted:

— Comrade Colonel. We were in Kharkov! On its eastern outskirts!

I carefully looked at Lukashov: no, he is not joking.

"Except for the policemen hastily placed on the roads by the Germans, there is no enemy in these villages!" And the policemen, as soon as they saw us, who went where in all shoulder blades ...

- Calm down, Lukashov. Have you talked with Kharkiv residents?

Yes, we talked. Local residents say that there is a terrible panic among the Nazis in the city. Officers load the loot into cars and hurry to leave.

Russian Tishki and Cherkasy Tishki.

83

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

After Lukashov's report on his raid, I suggested that he and his horsemen rest. He looked in amazement:

- So how do you relax? Why?

Because you are tired from the road.

He drew himself up, saluted, angry and disappointed, and, loudly banging his heels, went out of the house.

How I understood it! But what else can be said? I called Ryabyshev again. He listened and thanked.

- The order remains in effect. Settle in!

Three hours later, we learned that our neighbor on the left, the 226th Infantry Division, commanded by General Gorbatov, repulsed the first counterattacks of enemy tanks "...

Gorbatov himself, the commander of the 226th division, who achieved the most significant success in the offensive of the 38th army and was attacked by units of the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions and units of the 71st infantry division, recalled this unfortunate day, May 13: "... we captured Chervona Roganka and a number of heights to the west. The enemy counterattacked us, but without success. We have taken prisoners. At this time, from the left neighbor, the 124th rifle division, a notification was received that it was being counterattacked from the south-west by infantry: up to a hundred tanks. Somewhat later we observed the withdrawal of this division; the enemy occupied Peschanoe behind our left flank. And the infantry with fifty tanks was moving towards us. For a day we fought off the attacks, and then we had to leave the Uncovered and the height of 199.0. During the three days of fighting, we captured 126 prisoners, 28 guns (15 of them heavy), 20 mortars, 45 machine guns, a lot of ammunition and other trophies.

However, let us return to the first battalion of the 211th regiment.

"On May 14 at 0430, the Stukas attacked the enemy positions in front of the right flank and thus provided little support to the battalion in its defensive battle," the historians of the 71st division report. — Enemy mortar fire and friendly bomber attacks alternate. But

those-

| Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S. 235 - 237. 2 Gorbatov A.V. Years and wars. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1965. - S. 213 - 214.

84

Konstantin Bykov

now their own artillery intervenes in the battle. Not far from this place, a tank battle is raging.' Now our own military aviation has full control of the airspace and gouges out the enemy².

Enemy movements are detected on the heights south of the battalion. At 11.30 the enemy attacked from the northeast. (From the north-east, the Germans could be attacked by units of the 244th Rifle Division, Colonel I.A. Istomin, obviously, the 911th Rifle Regiment. The 244th Rifle Division also included the 907th and 914th Rifle Regiments). Own artillery opened fire at direct fire on the attackers. The battalion starts firing from heavy machine guns and repulses the enemy attack with heavy losses for him. "Things" turn Petrovsky into a mess. Bombs rain down from them in rows into this abyss, leading the enemy into great confusion and causing him high losses.

Our attack must bring this village back into our hands. But again, on the left, the enemy attacks. However, to no avail. In the coming darkness begins its own attack on Petrovskoye. The machine guns hit the suitable groups, but in the twilight they could not do much harm. All the companies penetrated through the descending valley into the hollow of the stream, in which lay a settlement stretched out for about 2 km. Using the twilight, the arrows, unnoticed by the enemy, penetrated close to the settlement. When the first houses were reached, shooting began from all directions. A real hail of shells hit the attackers. Several houses start to burn. Tracers fly along the village

streets. From house to house, the foot soldiers move forward until they reach the exit from the settlement. This happened at half

Not far from Petrovsky were the tanks of the German 3rd Panzer Division and our 57th, 90th and 36th Tank Brigades. Unfortunately, the heavy tanks of the 90th brigade did not take part in the battle - according to the memoir version, they were sent in pursuit of the Germans retreating to Kharkov, where these tanks died. The T-34, sent after them, also died.

2? re 71. shashchene-Omyup ip Imeyep U'eKKper 1939 - 1945. - 5. 175.

85

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

night. The calm of the night was replaced by the noise of battle. However, it is early dawn here, and the orders are to equip their positions as quickly as possible. The battalion is burrowing on the front slope.

On that day, the 34th Rifle and 32nd Artillery Regiments of the 13th Guards Rifle Division were in the Petrovsky area. "From the morning of May 14, the number of enemy planes over our battle formations increased significantly," writes division commander Rodimtsev. - The guardsmen of the 34th regiment, where Trofimov is commander, are also not easy. Five enemy tanks simultaneously rolled up to the battery of 45-millimeter guns. Falling, slain by machine-gun bursts, our gunners. Three guns are suppressed. Their calculations were lost. The 1st battalion of the 34th regiment slowly retreats in the direction of the settlement of Petrovskoye.

The enemy again threw aircraft into battle. Bombs are exploding in the defense zone of the first battalion. Airplanes are descending, firing cannons...

The headquarters of the Elin regiment (42nd Guards Rifle Regiment) was located in battle formations, in the forest southeast of Petrovsky. The command post of the artillery regiment of Major Klyagin (32nd Guards Ap.) was also located in the same forest, more than half of his guns were on direct fire. The headquarters of the Trofimov regiment (34th guards brigade) was located in the forest east of Petrovsky ...

But German aviation became more active every hour. If in the morning enemy planes were circling over us in groups of three to six planes, now 12-18 planes were constantly hovering over our battle formations. The old story was being repeated, the same "devil's carousel" that we experienced back in the first weeks of the war. But now, simultaneously with the bombing strike, the Nazis also launched a tank strike.

"On the night of May 15, when we gathered for a military council, a report was received that the enemy had attacked the 34th Guards Regiment in the village of Petrovskoye," adds Rodimtseva.

GO:e71. shashchene-O / usyup ip 7meyep U \ Ue {Kperd 1939 - 1945. - \$ 5. 176. 2 Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S. 238 - 240.

86

Konstantin Bykov

commander-28 Ryabyshev. - With the beginning of the night enemy attack, the artillerymen of the 32nd Guards Artillery Regiment under the command of Major Klyagin knocked out eight tanks, but they themselves lost two guns and two teams of horses. When dawn broke, the guards left Petrovskoe. Colonel AI Rodimtsev rushed to the location of the regiment, got acquainted with the situation and ordered to take the village. The second battalion went on the attack, recaptured half of the village from the Germans and held it all day, but the rest of the units had no success.

In the description of the events of May 15, the German side does not mention that part of Petrovsky was recaptured by the Soviet troops. Maybe this is due to the fact that under the "capture of Petrovsky"

should be understood not as a physical presence in a populated area, but as fire control over it after the enemy has been driven out of there. Obviously, therefore, having captured Petrovskoye, the Germans fortified not in itself, but on the slopes of the nearby heights. Here they met the beginning of day 15

May.

"When the morning wakes up, combat activity comes to life again," the history of the 71st division says. — The enemy has settled on the opposite slope. It is methodically destroyed by fire from carbines and machine guns. Mortar and anti-tank gun support this fight. When the enemy positions were cleared just after noon, the battalion gets a short temporary respite. At some distance, German tanks appear in front of the battalion and do their job. Stukas and bombers are used in large numbers. Large crowds of enemy archers gather on the distant heights. They are also attacked by Stukas and bombers, and hundreds of them choose the fate of the defector to avoid destruction. Until dusk, the work of destruction continues, then calm reigns.

Perhaps on this day the fighters of the 34th were taken prisoner.

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 196 - 197. 2 Ge 71. Shashchene Ruuzyp {t Imeyep \ EkKner 1939 - 1945. - \$. 176.

87

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Trofimov Guards Regiment, which was temporarily encircled in a forest area to the east of Petrovskaya.

After the described events, the 1st battalion of the 211th regiment was thrown to the north, towards the Soviet breakthrough in the area of Vesely. However, he was immediately returned to the Babka River. Subsequent battles will unfold all in the same forest between Peremoga and Petrovskaya with the remnants of units of the 13th Guards. sd, regiments of the 162nd sd that came here, units of the 34th motorized rifle brigade and the 226th sd.

"On May 16, shortly after 4 o'clock, the battalion took up its starting position for the offensive in the direction of Veseleye-Liptsy!," says the annals of the 71st division. — At 7 o'clock, after continuous progress, the heights in front of the indicated place were reached. Both flanks of the enemy (obviously, we are talking about Istomin's 244th Rifle Division and Rogachevsky's 169th Rifle Division - Ed.) were already covered by tanks and motorized rifles, so there was not much work for the battalion. However, in one place near Babka, the enemy formed a bridgehead. Therefore, the battalion is ordered to go there for use. The bridgehead must be liquidated.

First there was an 8 km march. The battalion passed Petrovskaya, which was completely destroyed. At night, after the evening march, the battalion stopped. Obviously, the enemy noticed him, since heavy fire was opened on the newly occupied positions. Heavy enemy tanks?, which were in front of the positions, covered them with shells. There were many dead and wounded. The commander of the battalion, Hauptmann Gan (NaBp), was also wounded. He was replaced by Oberleutnant Stahlmann (Za Tapl).

At 0730 (May 17) the enemy attacked the right flank. Wave after wave rolled on the positions of the battalion. Concentrated fire of artillery, mortars and easel

The Soviet 169th and 244th Rifle Divisions of the 28th Army broke through the GV areas of these points.

2 The 57th brigade, which was transferred to support Rodimtsev, had 10 heavy tanks.

88

Konstantin Bykov

machine gun attack was repulsed. After that, the enemy digs in and remains calm at night.

As the glorious day began on May 18, the Stukas and bombers howled over the battalion's positions and attacked the enemy continuously. All day these air raids continued, but in the evening the earth shook and large masses of the enemy began an offensive on a broad front. Everything was shrouded in smoke and dust, drowned in enemy cannonade. Their own artillery was constantly bludgeoning the ranks of the attackers, assisted by Stukas and bombers. The advancing enemy was completely defeated. What was left of the enemy and could run, sought salvation in flight. The enemy was also calmed down on the left flank. This attack was his destruction. His burning tanks are everywhere. As dusk breaks in, peace spreads over the battlefield. In the evening Hauptman Fastenrath (Eaengal) takes charge of the battalion.

On the morning of May 19, the fierce struggle continues. The Russians again go over to the attack, first on the battalion sector, then they attack the neighboring unit on the right. During the first half of the day, the attack becomes more and more massed. The enemy is using great forces, he is trying by all means to break through to Kharkov. All available own forces and heavy weapons were to be used to repel this blow. In the sweltering heat, the foot soldiers lie in their trenches and repulse these attacks, which have been going on for several days. Just after lunch, the Russians attack all along the line again. Summoned Stukas quickly appear at the designated location and gouge out the enemy. Nevertheless, enemy planes intervene and, like a rake, clean our positions with their airborne weapons. After the enemy pressure eased around 1700, many enemy tanks continued to move in the twilight. However, the night passed peacefully.

' On this day, the offensive of the 28th and 38th armies began.

89

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

On May 20, at 0300, Russian hurricane fire began, to which their own artillery responded. The air trembled with the roar of shots and explosions. At 0500 enemy pressure intensified - enemy planes attacked the positions of the battalion with bombs, side cannons and machine guns and created many difficulties. From 6 o'clock the Stukas intervene in the fight, which brings tangible relief. Two anti-aircraft guns also participate in ground combat. Enemy tank formations are showered with bombs and shells and suffer heavy losses. The fight continues until noon. Finally, the offensive force of the enemy is broken, and this brings calm to the battalion sector. However, the noise of a tank battle was still heard from the north for a long time (obviously, this refers to a tank battle in which our tank group took part as part of the 6th Guards, 57th and 84th tank brigades and the German tank group from the 3rd th and 23rd tank divisions). |

At dawn on May 21, after a good night, their own artillery begins to beat. Then German fighters, Stukas and bombers join in. The initiative in the Kharkov area went over to the side of the Germans. Although the Russians continue to defend themselves desperately, the offensive of the division next to the left is successful.' On the battalion sector, insignificant combat activity prevails on this day, which fades on May 22. Now the battle is raging on other sectors of the front. For the next night, the battalion was scheduled to shift, which was carried out with the onset of darkness. The battalion marches to the village of Nepokrytaya and goes there to rest. The settlement was completely destroyed, which testifies to the heavy battle that took place here. The battalion is now reunited with the regiment and division and is enjoying some well-deserved calm after the most severe and complete deprivation of effort in recent weeks.

On the left, that is, to the north, on this day there were parts of the 75th infantry division. Even further north, also in zone 28A, are units of the 294th, 57th, 88th, and 168th Infantry Divisions.

90

Konstantin Bykov

On May 25, the enemy suspends his numerous and casualty attacks in front of the general front of the division and conducts only an insignificant local subversive activity.

On May 28, the pressure of the enemy weakened and in front of HUP.AK. (17th Army Corps), standing north of Sh.A.K. (51st Army Corps). Appointed from this HUP.A.K. combat reconnaissance observes the withdrawal of the enemy. The subdivision of the division assigned to reconnaissance also detects waste.

On May 29, reconnaissance reports that Bolshaya Grandma is not occupied by the enemy. On May 30, the NKG is transferred there (the front line of defense). After a calm course of the following days, on June 4, the division was replaced by units of the 294th Infantry Division "(.

Ryabyshev sadly summed up the results of these battles: "Despite the fact that the 28th Army broke through the enemy defenses in its entire zone and advanced 18 to 25 kilometers to the west, the main goal - the liberation of Kharkov - was not achieved. The pace of the advance was slow for a number of reasons. This allowed the enemy command to maneuver forces, removing them from unattacked areas, pulling up reserves from the depths, consolidating battle formations, creating a balance of forces in their favor where it was required ... Already on the sixth day of our offensive, the enemy struck a counter attack by two tank (3rd and 23rd) and two infantry divisions on the flanks of the army. and went to the rear of the troops of the first echelon, stopping our advance. The reserves and second-echelon troops I brought into battle stopped the enemy, inflicted serious losses on him, but they could not change the situation in our favor ... Until May 24, the formations of the 28th Army The Southwestern Front withdrew to the rear defensive line ...

... The reserves of the Southwestern Front were exhausted. For

Be 71. Shashchene-Ouzyup ip Ymeyep Weikner 1939 - 1945. Obyer. Gepressoshche, 2006. - 5. 177 - 178

91

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

their replenishment from the 28th army was left by the 3rd guards cavalry corps with the 6th guards tank and 34th motorized rifle brigades; three artillery regiments of the reserve of the main command, the 57th, 84th tank brigades were withdrawn. In the zone of the 28th Army, the regrouping of troops and the expansion of the army defensive zone began.

Reconnaissance battalion of the 71st Infantry Division from April 28 to May 28, 1942. Since the 71st division did not act as a single unit near Kharkov, the structure of the story about the division in its annals is of a battalion or regimental nature. True, after the first 3-4 days of the offensive, the Soviet formations and their units also began to mix up and resubordinate (for example, the 343rd Rifle Regiment and the anti-tank battalion of the 38th Rifle Division were subordinated to the 13th Guards Rifle Division).

"How fierce the defensive battle was for all divisions of the division on the front east of Kharkov from mid-May to early June, is evidenced by the following report from the diary ApNYAgap? \$-AMe an? 171 (of the 171st reconnaissance battalion of the 71st Infantry Division), the chroniclers of the 71st Infantry Division tell us and quote this report: "The battalion arrived at the unloading station in Kharkov on - West of Kharkov. Here, in Dergachi, at the end of October 1941, shortly before the capture of Kharkov, a strong battle took place. The skeletons of 9 Russian tanks, among which were several T-34s, were still close to the village and were a good visual aid for training upcoming actions.

On the evening of May 10, after 12 days of rest, the battalion left their quarters and began to march. In two night transitions to the preliminary goal - Butovka - he reaches the so-called

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing, 1990. - S. 216 - 217, 219.

92

Konstantin Bykov

projected by "Zheleznaya ulitsa". In bad weather, this section of the railway was the only passable access road to the front southeast of Kharkov.

As soon as the battalion stopped in a small forest near Butovka for a three-day respite, the order came back to the place of the last cantonment. I had to march all day along the "Iron Street" back. After several short daily marches, a small forest area was reached to the east of Lebedinka. When on May 16 the division occupied a defensive sector on both sides of Nepokrytaya at Babka, the reconnaissance battalion was ordered to find out what possibilities existed for counterattack and blocking. At the moment of receipt of this order, an exceptionally strong attack by a low-flying aircraft on the battalion bivouac takes place. Many soldiers were killed and wounded. An ammunition truck was set on fire and several other vehicles were damaged.

On May 17, the battalion was pulled up to the Petrovskaya area. As he advanced there, it was not to be foreseen that this day should be a special day for the battalion - the first combat use of this year. At 15:00, an order was received from the division to start the offensive at 17:40. In front of the tired soldiers, there was a hollow that had no shelter, which had to be overcome. Despite the ever-increasing enemy artillery fire covering the offensive zone, and strong enemy resistance from the height ahead and in the "Forest Gauntlet" >?, the offensive moved forward quickly and without delay. The enemy was trampled. Enemy units remaining in the forest (approximately 200 - 250 soldiers)

` Lebedinka - a village that was located near Chervona Roganka (now Verkhnyaya Roganka) - the offensive zone of Gorbатов's 226th Rifle Division.

2 Judging by the map given in the history of the 71st frontier, the reconnaissance battalion was in front of a height of 212.3. "Forest Glove" is the same forest between Petrovskaya and Peremoga, which was in the offensive zone, and then the defense of the 13th Guards. SD Rodimtsev.

93

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

after a fierce close fight, they run away in a ravine along the eastern edge of the "Forest Glove" to the flank of their right neighbor - the 211th Infantry Regiment. To avoid the attack of the fleeing Russians on the open flank, the regiment temporarily pulled him back. And yet with cries of "Hurrah! and the trumpet signals, before which the Russians froze, the last part of the 4 km offensive zone was overcome. Already at 18.55, the commander of the reconnaissance battalion was able to report: "The goal of the offensive has been achieved." The division commander expressed special gratitude to the battalion. In the evening, under heavy enemy fire, the battalion prepared to defend the front line of defense. At 21 o'clock, after sending a patrol group and establishing contact with the division, contact was also restored with the right neighbor. The offensive of the sapper company on the left sector was also successful. And it was soon reported that the old front line of defense had been taken and was being held along its entire length. After this offensive and the evening artillery shelling, the battalion had to regret the loss of 6 people killed. The night passed quietly. The morning (May 18), however, did not bring any Russian offensive, but there was strong artillery fire. In addition, it was possible to observe how large masses of enemy infantry and numerous tanks flocked into the lowland in front of the battalion's positions. They were rendered harmless by the Stukas. Second

half a day brought an attack of 17 tanks on the left neighbor. Battalion positions are covered by artillery fire and processed by low-flying aircraft.

' The reconnaissance battalion and the 2nd company of the sapper battalion of the 71st Infantry Division advanced between heights 214, Zi 212.3, where they were opposed by the 34th and 42nd regiments of the 13th Guards. sd. The offensive went in the direction of height 194.5, where the 42nd regiment withdrew and where the 39th regiment of the 13th division was located. By the end of the day, the 13th division was driven back to Bolshaya Babka. In her hands there was only a small foothold in the area of the Krasny Yar beam.

2 On the morning of May 18, in order to divert enemy forces from the site of Rodimtsev's division into battle in the Krasnoy area, the 34th separate motorized rifle brigade was thrown. At the same time, the 162nd Rifle Division, Colonel M.I. Matveev, after which the enemy of the 171st reconnaissance battalion, according to a map from the history of the 71st division, became the 501st and 627th joint ventures of the 162nd rifle division.

94

Konstantin Bykov

tami. The situation becomes threatening when the Russian artillery covers the company of sappers lying on the left so hard that the height seems to be on fire, and the company temporarily retreated. Because of the rapidly falling darkness, the battle group Schmidt-Ott! (5svia-ON) also does not bring any relief.

On May 19, the Russian offensive expected with such great tension begins? Already at night, the Russian infantry went on the attack with a force of up to a battalion. The attack was repulsed using all the heavy weapons available and thanks to a well placed artillery barrage. When in the first half of the day the infantry and tanks again began to accumulate in the lowland in front of the battalion's positions, there could be no doubt about an enemy attack in the next few hours. At 11.45 the right flank of the 2nd squadron received the first armored warning. 4 tanks and 3 reconnaissance armored vehicles approached from the side of the Nepokrytaya-Rogachevka road to height 194.53 and fired at the positions of the 2nd squadron. After that, they returned to the lowland, in which, meanwhile, a concentration of enemy infantry had been established. Fortunately, at the last minute we managed to fix the telephone cable to the division. The adjutant reported the situation and requested artillery support. The commander calls [a*] and asks to urgently organize support for the Stukas. One of the 6 enemy tanks coming from Krasny went down into the lowland. Now the positions of the battalion are under the fire of tanks, which drive up separately and are removed behind

In September 1941, Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott commanded the battle groups of the 3rd Panzer Division Model and played a significant role in the encirclement and destruction of the troops of the Southwestern Front.

2 It was decided to continue the offensive of the northern group of Soviet troops (21st, 28th, 38th armies) on May 19 in order to alleviate the position of our southern grouping on the Barvenkovsky bridgehead.

In the area of this height were the 42nd and 39th Guards Rifles. 13th Guards Rifle Division and 627th Rifle Division of the 162nd Rifle Division According to the maps of D. Glantz, the 90th brigade was also located here. There could also be tanks of the 13th brigade of the 38th army.

s Departments of the division headquarters: [a — operational, ® — rear, [s — reconnaissance.

95

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

those again. Another 5 tanks are moving from the northwest to the southeast towards the positions. A battery of mortars from Sh./707 (3rd division of the 707th mortar regiment) and 9./AK171 (9th battery of the 171st artillery regiment) lowland

covered with good barrage fire. Moreover, the fire of these two batteries has a devastating effect on the masses of infantry who have taken their initial position behind the tanks. At 13.15 the center of gravity of the enemy offensive shifted to the left flank of the 1st Squadron, led by Captain Kroeger (Kgoreg). After the tank alarm had sounded several times, the first tanks moved from the lowland to the 1st squadron, and the tension among the soldiers increased extremely. It became impossible to control the soldiers lying in separate holes. This should have been expected... The first tank reached the left flank of the 1st Squadron. He made a short stop and opened machine-gun fire on the positions. Then he again sets in motion and rolls from the left flank exactly to the command post of Captain Kroeger. The soldiers pull their heads in and let the tank walk around quietly. As soon as the tank rolled, fire was opened from the left flank on the infantry following it. Thanks to this, she was repulsed. When the tank was at a distance of 50 paces from the command post of the 1st Squadron, Non-Commissioned Officer Fink (EK) Corporal Bedrowski (Blago\\$_K!) jumped out of their holes and with bundles of hand grenades rushed at the enemy tank. A bunch on the tank, another - under the tank. Explosions rip off the caterpillar cover and start a fire. The tank increases speed and rolls to the right. At the same time, he crushes the heavy machine gun of the 1st squadron. The soldiers managed to jump into their holes and remain unharmed. The tank, shrouded in smoke, continues to roll over the positions of the 2nd squadron and crushes the 5-cm anti-tank gun of the 2nd battery of the 171st anti-tank battalion (2./P7]e. - Amsch.171). But also without destroying the calculation. After that, the burning tank retreats to the valley to the east. Calculation of the 3.7-cm anti-tank gun of the 3rd

' Soviet commanders realized even in the sad [194] year how pernicious it was to find a soldier, especially an unfired one, in an individual rifle cell.

96

Konstantin Bykov

squadron is destroyed by a direct artillery hit. Enemy infantry, supported by the fire of enemy tanks standing on the reverse slope, goes on the attack. She fights back with machine gun and infantry fire.

However, the lowland in front of the front line of defense is again, like water, filled with enemy infantry masses. And at 14.05, three tanks of the T-34 type, accompanied by infantry, begin a new attack. When the enemy, supporting his offensive, attacked the positions of the battalion with 8-10 low-flying aircraft, the battalion commander again calls the 1a (operational department) of the division and informs him of the situation. [a reports that the artillery commander has already been warned and will concentrate fire against this attack. In addition, the support of the Stukas was guaranteed in the near future. Again 3 steel giants roll on the left flank of the 1st squadron. Then all three tanks turn left and roll 20 meters from the forward edge of the defense of the 2nd squadron and along

him.

Directly in front of the command post of the squadron, they stop and open fire with all barrels on the 2nd squadron. Lieutenant Kersh (Kurzsp) and one of the soldiers rushed to the unmanned 3.7 cm anti-tank gun and fired about 15 shots at the tanks. All shots hit the target, but to no avail. More successful is Lieutenant Kaempfer (KAtreer) of the 171st Anti-Tank Fighter Battalion, who manages to hit one of these three attacking tanks below the turret with his 5 cm anti-tank gun, rendering the tank incapacitated. After that, all three tanks return to the valley. While the infantry following the tanks (400-500 men) is driven back with heavy losses, the crew of the wrecked tank stops in the middle of the slope and tries to repair it. However, the fire of the squadron's heavy machine guns drives the crew back into the tank. Following this, the promised attack of the Stukas as part of a whole geschwader begins! Cars dive down into the valley

Selected by us. Geschwader - air squadron.

4 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 97

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

which soon after that there are strong fires. However, the enemy infantry returned and began to concentrate on the collective farm. 7 enemy tanks from the east are again trying to win the high ground. At the same time, they fall under the second wave of "Pieces". You didn't have to be astute to predict the results of this attack. Three enemy tanks came out of the ravine, but stopped, apparently from the damage they had received. Two of them are later set on fire by artillery fire. Two enemy patrol groups advancing cautiously forward were also destroyed. At 14.30, 8 enemy tanks were discovered, which, arriving from various directions, concentrated on a collective farm near Krasnoye. L1-88 bombers cover the collective farm with bombs, and all the tanks are destroyed.

At 15 o'clock the general offensive was repulsed. The designated front line of defense was held during all attacks. The commander of the 2nd squadron, Lieutenant Birkan (VisKBaBlp), shortly before the end of the attack, was seriously wounded in both hands by a fragment of an anti-aircraft gun shell. Slightly wounded Lieutenant Enzen (Tepzep) takes command of the 2nd squadron. For success in this defense, the division commander expressed his personal recognition to the battalion. For two more days the battalion remained in its positions, which were still under enemy fire. Enterprises of strike units and low-flying aircraft attacks! were reflected. An attempt to prepare a tank and infantry attack was uncovered in advance and thwarted by artillery and Stukas. Particular success was achieved in the morning of May 20, when one of the squadrons shot down the attacking Rata. Enemy snipers, who caused disturbance to food carriers, were very hampered. On the evening of May 21, the battalion was relieved. After a day of rest, he again took up position on the left flank of the division. In the following days the enemy attacked again

"The attack of low-flying aircraft (in the original - Te NSheregapepye) can also be translated as "attack by attack aircraft." We can talk about the IL-2, and about a fighter armed for attack.

98

Konstantin Bykov

and again. In this he was helped by the landscape, thanks to which the enemy could quietly take up his original position. Enemy artillery and mortars caused many casualties. On May 24, the enemy attacked with 18 tanks and infantry mainly the sector of the left neighbor. The infantry was defeated by well-placed artillery fire, however, already at the very front line. There was a problem with the tanks, constantly maneuvering, they managed to elude the artillery fire. In the evening, the enemy achieved little success in the sector of the left neighbor, capturing the height from him, though not for long. Before parts of the battalion, the enemy suspended its offensive. Two quiet days later, on May 28, the enemy retreated 3 kilometers and occupied a new defensive line on the opposite bank of the Babka.

Kharkov battle as a whole. Distribution of "gingerbread" and plans for the future. Having finished the story about the activities of the units of the 71st Infantry Division in the Battle of Kharkov, the chroniclers of 71 G.O. summed up: |

"During the defensive battle on the front east of Kharkov, the division achieved a success that was of decisive importance. The extremely tough and repeated attacks of the enemy, undertaken with the aim of breaking through the front and covering the German formations, with the introduction of powerful weapons into battle, were successfully repelled. After that, an operation was carried out to the south and southeast of Kharkov, which is known in the history of the Second World War under the name "Battle of Encirclement in the Kharkov Region." This operation ended with great German success, which effectively influenced the subsequent offensive in the southern part of the Eastern Front.

This venture went like this:

On May 15, Krasnograd and Taranovka were lost (to the south

-Y -Y

'P+e71. Niaschene-Ouuzyup pp Khmeyep Ueyklpeh 1939 - 1945. - 5. 178 - 182.

2 This refers to the attack on Stalingrad and the Caucasus.

99

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

east of Poltava). Almost unhindered, Russian tanks moved westward and on May 16 were already 40 km east of Poltava, where the headquarters of Army Group South was located. However, USh.A.K. (8th Army Corps) held Merefa and neutralized the Russian breakthrough at the very last moment. Now the previously planned operation of "tongs" by the high command of Army Group South (OB 51a)! in the direction of Izyum was not feasible in the originally envisaged way (i.e., by hitting both "pincers." — Auth.). Since half of the 6th Army was in heavy defensive battles and was partially driven back, it was necessary to act very quickly. OV 514 saw the only solution in throwing all the forces of the 1st Panzer Army westward into the Dnepropetrovsk-Poltava region in order to close the gap. The Chief of Staff of the Ground Forces intervened in this dubious situation and made a bold decision: on May 17, without delay and without looking back at the enemy breakthrough, to launch the previously prepared "tongs" operation, but only with a blow from the southern hand. At the same time, the main task was assigned to the 1st Panzer Army, which was supposed to break through to the southern flank of the 6th Army (to the 44th Balakleya Pd mentioned by us. - Auth.) and cut off the enemy that had broken through. The 17th Army was given a combat order - to strike with the forces of the GP.A.K. (101) Aveg Rukh. and 257.1.0.)?, as well as parts of XXXXGU.A.K. from the area of Slavyansk to Izyum, in order to secure the eastern flank of their tank formations. May 18 Sh.Rap7er-Kogr5. (3rd Panzer Corps) was supposed to strike with the forces of 14.7. -Pvm .., 16.R7. — Rome. and 60.1.0 (toe.), 1.SeB. —Puh. and 100.) veg-pulu. through Barvenkovo (south of Izyum) to Balakleya and, having united with the 6th Army, thus cut off the enemy

'
In the original - GapheporegaNop, which can be translated as "attack on both flanks" or "pincers". Officially, the "pincers" near Kharkov were called the "Fridericus-1" operation.

2257th Infantry and 101st Jaeger Divisions of the 52nd Army Corps.

100

Konstantin Bykov

from its rear communications through the Donets. HT.A.K. (298., 380, 384 and 389.1.0.) was supposed to join the offensive of Sh.R7.Kogr\$ on his left (eastern. - Auth.) flank'. The 6th Army was to begin active operations on its southern flank as soon as the advancing 1st Panzer Army was in front of its front.

In 30-degree heat, formations assigned to attack from the south attacked the enemy without sufficient preliminary preparation.

The offensive of the 17th Army was a complete success. The infantry reached the southern part of Izyum two days later and blocked the bank of the Donets with six crossings important for the enemy located there. Thus, the enemy was cut off from his rear communications. On May 19, Sh.R7.Kogr\$ reached the area north of Barvenkov. However, HT.A.K. was fettered by heavy fighting and succeeded little. South of Kharkov on May 17, the enemy, risking numerous tanks, tried to make a breakthrough. In a fierce struggle, USh.A.K. repelled all attacks. 2] May air reconnaissance reported that the enemy had begun to withdraw. Immediately Sh.R7.Kogr\$ struck with his mobile formations (14th TD, 16th TD, 60th Motorized Front) to the north from Barvenkovo to Balakleya. 6th Army

moved with her 1]. A.K. and UPG.A.K. south southeast. The main forces of X1.A.K. also went ahead. On May 22, forward detachments coming from the south and north met south of Balakleya and established contact between themselves behind enemy lines. The enemy forces that had broken through were completely overwhelmed by this blow to their rear. The encircled troops were forced to fight on all sides. Their leadership lost their heads, and their supplies stopped.

The spring battle near Kharkov on May 17 - 24, 1942 was

That is, the flanks of the 3rd motorized corps breaking through the Soviet front were provided by two army corps.

2? Re 71. iaschene-Omyup ip Imepup U'e {Kpeh 1939 - 1945. - 5. 184.

101

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

fe zsmasm chop Spogcom-Evit t Ma! 1942

Myo 20 Agyo: 13 \$210.32: @:.,2= 6:3 Ko Sophies waet Roz 6 Ato: re IE» Alfg? 0 vog Sleg'o' 12- 163 303 0.7-1 Ra 6, 9 KO ——— > } beztosme Aucheeem Beer 37 Alley: Oonesmoe befeteyaogit 9% Zcit 17-285 | yy Ch E.; Oolesve 6 Agleve private office ® yyya 21-235 830.22: 0. Tyut\$ek o. Zito V: And K! ‹

930.272: 0.12 Otho! , 4gyt V.

m Kazuya Chess Earth 20 \$<^ 0.15 RE Ve, 7KO

wonder: oh p 7]

Map of the Kharkov battle (from the history of the 71st division).

Vita from defense to a battle of annihilation with the victory of numerically smaller forces. These forces were assembled in decisive areas to carry out the main tasks and used against the most susceptible places of any army.

102

Konstantin Bykov

and the front, namely, against their rear, as a result of which the numerical ratio of the sides was equalized. Donets, as a base of operations for the summer offensive, was acquired again. 22 rifle divisions, 7 cavalry divisions, 14 motorized mech. enemy brigades were destroyed. 240,000 people taken prisoner. The commanders of the 6th and 57th Russian armies perished. However, it was the last cauldron of this size in which the Russians could be locked up. On June 5, the commander of Sh.R7.Kogr\$, General Mackensen, visited the command post of the division in Korobochkino (Kogobo (\$ from the WTO). On the same day |.K.131 left the 71st division.

During and after the battle near Kharkov, the division commander and the commander of the 6th Army in the orders expressed gratitude to the troops and recognition of their constant strength and merits. They have the following content:

Command post of the division, 05/19/1942 ORDER FOR THE DIVISION!

Soldiers of the 71st Division!

The defensive battle around Kharkov is at its peak. Since yesterday, the division's sector has become the decisive focus of the battle.

Using a huge amount of people and materials, the enemy seeks to obtain a forceful solution.

Despite prolonged attacks by infantry and tanks, you did not surrender an inch of the positions entrusted to you, in constant counterattacks you returned them back to your hands.

I am proud to be at the head of such a division.

The enemy has not yet fallen. We have hot battle days ahead of us.

I know that everyone. of you will do your duty—at the very least risking your life—and that we will win.

Signed: von Hartmann (Knightapp) 'O1e71. laschene-Oguzyup ip Khmeyep U'eyKpeh 1939 - 1945. - 5. 185.

103

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Corps commander Corps headquarters, 05/22/1942 Headquarters of the Central A.K.

HULL ORDER!

Soldiers of the 51st Army Corps!

On May 12, a large Russian offensive began, which was supposed to cover Kharkov from the northeast and south, in order to bring it back into Russian hands.

No less than seven rifle divisions and seven Russian tank brigades fought the 51st Corps in order to forcefully break through its front.

The enemy did not succeed in this, although he threw hundreds of heavy tanks into the battle.

In the 109-day tough, stubborn and heroic struggle, on the defensive and on the offensive, you inflicted huge losses on the enemy and finally pushed him back.

At the same time, Gruner's group (Craneg)!, which fought from May 12 to 25, being surrounded in Ternova, deserves special mention. Under the most unfavorable conditions, heroically defending herself, she repelled all Russian attacks until May 21 the 23rd Panzer Division, and especially the Schmidt-Ott (Zsbita-Ots) group from the 3rd Panzer Division, ziya, it was not possible to free them, while other parts of the 23rd Panzer Division and the 71st Infantry Division defended Babka Front with iron. | |

No less than 7,200 prisoners, 259 tanks destroyed, 137 guns, 78 anti-tank guns, as well as an innumerable and boundless amount of property and ammunition testify to the magnitude and severity of your struggle, which will forever remain a particularly glorious page in the history of this war. . You deserve gratitude and recognition.

In this hour filled with proud sorrow, we remember io

' The Gruner battle group, which was defending in the encircled Ternova, consisted of units of the 429th regiment of the 168th infantry division. On May 16, the Soltmann combat group (Zo {tapp), consisting of units 23.R7.GUH .: P. / R7.V 21.201 and G. (5RU \ U /) / R? Otep.V 25.128.

104

Konstantin Bykov

our fallen comrades who, in this difficult struggle, sacrificed their lives for the sake of the fatherland. We bow our banners before their graves. 'Their sacrifices must not be in vain! The struggle will go on and on, until the final victory and the onset of peace.

Signed: von Seydlitz Lieutenant General and Commander [1.A.K.]

Commander of the 6th Army Army Headquarters, 05/28/1942

ORDER FOR THE ARMY!

The defensive battle around Kharkov ended. In a 10-day struggle, the army repulsed the onslaught of much superior Russian forces and, at the same time, defeated a massive counter offensive of enemy tanks, unprecedented in previous campaigns.

The command and troops on the defensive and on the offensive performed their duty brilliantly. Their firmness and steadfastness led to success, the result of which was the defeat of 20 Bolshevik rifle divisions, 15 tank brigades, and 2 cavalry divisions. At the same time, the Bolsheviks left in our hands 8500 prisoners, 110 guns and numerous other weapons. 456 enemy tanks were destroyed.

I express my thanks and my special recognition to the brave corps and its command for excellent leadership and exemplary performance of duties.

At the same time, I especially remember the sacrifices that were made in this struggle.

New challenges are before us. And the fruitfulness of the last fighting days gives us firm confidence in THAT WE WILL FULFILL THEM.

Commander Signed: Paulus Panzer General?

Re 71. shachene-Bmyup ip Has \ Menknee 1939 - 1945. - 5. 187. 2? Re 71. sashene-Guyyup t Imeyep U "e {Kpeh 1939 - 1945. -5. 188.

105

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

With these optimistic orders, the story of the participation of the 71st Infantry Division in the Kharkov battle ends. Then there was Operation Wilhelm, which for the 71st Infantry Division was to take part in the capture of a bridgehead on the Burluk River for the 3rd Panzer Corps.

According to German intelligence, 16 Soviet divisions had accumulated in the Volchansk-Kupyansk-Chuguev triangle. Sh.R7.Kogrz was supposed to encircle and destroy this grouping in order to "create favorable initial positions for the summer offensive".

On June 10, 1942, having received the prearranged Seidlitz signal, the 71st Infantry Division went on the offensive. And immediately: "The forward command post of the division on the dominating height in Nikolayevka was destroyed by Stalin's organs. As a result, any connection with the units was lost."

'Re71. Niaschene-Omzyup t meyep \ekner 1939 - 1945. - \$. 188.

3rd TANK DIVISION

Short story. The 3rd Panzer Division was formed in October 1935. The main stages of the military path: 1939 - Poland; 1940 - Holland, Belgium, France; 1941 - Brest, Slutsk, Bobruisk, Rogachev, Zhlobin, Mogilev, Sozh, Roslavl, Mglin, Unecha, Starodub, participation in the Kiev boiler, Tula; 1942 - Orel, Kursk, participation in battles against the northern and southern shock

groupings of Soviet troops near Kharkov, Caucasus; 1943 - Terek, Rostov, Mius, Belgorod, Kharkov, Dnieper, Cherkasy; 1944 - Cherkasy, Uman, Bug, Dniester, Baranov, Narev; 1945 - Hungary, Styria, surrender to the Americans.

The 3rd Panzer Division included:

- Rap7er-Kegitepi 6 (three battalions! ');
- Espamep-Keritepi 394 (two infantry and one motorcycle battalion); g No. A:
- espamep-Kegitepe 3 (two rifle battalions);
- AIShepe-Veritepe 75 (two divisions);
- Rap7epaeeg-AMe! Pipe 521;
- Raptetsareg-AMe! lph 543;
- Rap7er-AtsYAAGap? \$-Ae! ipz 1 (by the beginning of the Kharkov battle it was merged with a motorcycle battalion);
- Ruosher-WashShop 39;
- MaspisMep-AMe!upo 39;
- Peerza (7-WabaShop 83.

In the battles of 1941, the 3rd Panzer Division was in the avant

Emblems of the 3rd Panzer Division.

'
After the Kharkov battle, the 3rd battalion was considered a training battalion - it was without tanks.

107

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

guard of the Guderian group and played a key role in the encirclement and defeat of the troops of the Southwestern Front in Ukraine.

During the Battle of Kharkov, the 3rd Panzer Division was commanded by Herman Breit (Negtapp Vteiv, 1892 - 1964). He began his military service in the 60th Infantry Regiment, with which he took part in the First World War and rose from lieutenant to major. He was the commander of the first German tank battalion. and from November 10, 1938 he commanded the 36th tank regiment. [January 1, 1939 Breit was promoted to Oberst. Participated in the Polish campaign. For the leadership of the 5th tank brigade in the French campaign, he was awarded the Knight's Cross. On a campaign against Russia, he led his brigade to the Berezina and on July 2, 1941 was transferred to the OKH. However, from October 2, 1941, he was again at the front, where he took command of the 3rd Panzer Division, and was awarded the Oak Leaves of the Knight's Cross for winter battles. In October 1942, while leading the division to the Terek, Bright was

The commanders of the 3rd Panzer Division (from left to right): Model (commanded the division during the Kyiv pocket) and Bright (during the Kharkov pocket).

108

Konstantin Bykov

again transferred to the OKH reserve. From 1943 until the end of the war, he commanded the 3rd tank corps (Kursk, Cherkasy cauldron, rank of general of tank troops, Swords).

3rd Panzer Division in the second (March) Battle of Kharkov. Help from the 44th Infantry Division. Berlin patronage. Preparation for the third (May) Battle of Kharkov. Rest in Kharkov. On March 7, 1942, the troops of the 38th Army, Lieutenant General K.S. Moskalenko and the 6th Army, Lieutenant General A.M. Gorodnyansky began the second Kharkov offensive operation this year. The first Kharkov operation, which was subsequently named Barvenkovo-Lozovsky due to its modest results, and not the grandeur of the idea, was carried out in January and ended with the formation of the so-called Barvenkovo ledge. The northern part of the narrow "throat" of this ledge was defended by the 44th German Infantry Division. In January and February 1942, the Soviet troops, despite titanic efforts, failed to drive this division out of Balakleya. In March, during another attempt to liberate Kharkov, the troops of the 38th and 6th armies were to surround and destroy the Chuguev-Balakley grouping of the enemy, including the 44th infantry division. The 21st Army of Lieutenant General V.N. Gordov, who posted a motorized rifle brigade on the Oboyan-Belgorod road.

Just there, to the north of the bloody fields of the battles already taken place and planned for the future, the 3rd Panzer Division was located.

"The second half of February and the first half of March were used by the 3rd Panzer Division to concentrate its forces in the Kursk region, to replenish and regroup them," the historians of the 3rd Panzer-O/u!31on tell us! . —

| Sessshe 4er 3. Rapkheg-Otyup VegInt-Vgapdepbige 1935-1945. Negatsizrerebebe wot Tgad! juosuegfapa deg O1y11op. WayaF money Wippap up? OCischeg E1cSheg. Vet, 1967. - \$. 246.

. 109

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The headquarters of the division was in the city itself. On February 12, a marching battalion consisting of 1000 Human...

From February 9 to March 12, 1942, the division was directly subordinate to the OKH. These few weeks of much-needed peace have been filled with new appointments and reassignments to various command positions. Oberst Kleeman (Keetapp), long-term commander of the 3rd Rifle Brigade!, became a major general and took over the command of the 90th Light Division, which fought in North Africa. Oberst Westhofen (U/ezShowen) became his heir. This officer previously worked in the Personnel Directorate of the Ground Forces, where his work was closely connected with the tank troops, and in the end he was the commander of the 1st rifle regiment of the 1st tank division, which fought near Leningrad, Kalinin and Moscow. Oberst Münzel (Mip2e] remained the commander of the tank regiment, Oberst Lieutenant Zimerman (Giptegtapp) commanded the 3rd Rifle Regiment (5.K.3), and Oberst Audersch (Achdog \$ sp) was appointed head of the department to the OKH Ordnance Department. The new commander of the 394th Infantry Regiment (5.K.394) was Oberst Challe de Bouillet (Spa!e\$ 4e VeamPets). He was well known as the chief of staff of the 16th Army Motorized Corps during the western campaign of the 3rd Panzer Division, and in the end he was the chief of staff in the 4th Panzer Army of General Gepner (Noerpeg). Major of the General Staff Bart (Major1.S. VacV), an able head of the Logistics Section of the Division Headquarters (T®), also left at the end of February. On March 5, the chief of supply of the division (Ochategteshegeezspaye) became the General Staff Hauptmann Dankworth (Nrit. 1. O. apk \ otsP) from the OKH. -

On March 3, 1942, the 3rd Panzer Division received an order to relocate to the area of the 6th Army near Kharkov. Here the division was subordinated to the 51st Army Corps (1st 1T.A.K..). She still did not know what tasks awaited her. Winter season

The 3rd Rifle Brigade of the 3rd Panzer Division consisted of the 3rd and 394th Rifle Regiments.

110

Konstantin Bykov

Soviet armies in the south, as well as in the central sector of the front, used it for the offensive, launching it against Army Group South. Their plans included the expulsion of German divisions from the industrial region of the Donets. At the same time, they managed to break through near Izyum to a distance of 90 km from the front and advance in a deep wedge into the German position at a distance of 20 km from Dnepropetrovsk. The enemy front, which had advanced far to the west, unambiguously called on the enemy to continue the offensive and threatened the city of Kharkov.

Already during the last days of February, the division created a combat group under the new commander 5.K..394, Oberst Chalet de Bouillet (SB[ez de VeaiTsetz), and sent it on a march to Kharkov. During this period of time, the battle group was the only fully motorized part of the division. It became mobile thanks to gears made from other military units, and consisted of the headquarters of the 394th rifle regiment, the Velman battalion (VmeStapp), made up of the companies of both rifle regiments, the 39th engineer battalion (Plosmer-VI. 39), the 3rd Battalion of the 75th Artillery Regiment (Sh./A.V.75) and from a company of heavy infantry guns (S.[(- Kotrashe 394). To this was added one tank company with 10 — On February 20, companies and batteries set out from Kursk along the route Oboyan, Belgorod, Mikoyanovka. Prolonged cold and deep snow made the transition difficult. Therefore, the battle group approached Kharkov only on March 4. After several calm days, Oberst Challe de Bouillet (SBaez\$ de VeaiPei) was to advance with his companies to the south of Chuguev, where the Soviets were breaking the defenses of the 44th Infantry Division (44.I.O.), and they had to be driven back by a counterattack. divisions after a short concentration in the starting position

' We are talking about the January Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya offensive operation of the Soviet troops, which ended with the formation of the Barvenkovo ledge - a springboard for the May Soviet offensive against Kharkov. Before Dnepropetrovsk was not 20, but about 100 km.

111

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

they launched an attack. They advanced from Andreevka to Shebelinka! and drove back the enemy forces?

Further, without talking about the retreat of the units of the 3rd Panzer Division behind the Seversky Donets, to Andreevka, the authors of the book on the history of the division proceed to the battles northeast of Kharkov - in the zone of the 38th Army of Moskalenko. Since March 7, this army has been striking with its main forces in the area of Ternovaya - Uncovered, Peschanoe - Bolshaya Babka. As a result of this offensive, territories on the western bank of the Seversky Donets were won, however, the 38th Army did not fulfill its main task.

"The main misfortune of the 38th Army was the lack of tanks and insufficient artillery support for the advancing troops," recalled K.S. Moskalenko. - Both had a sharply negative impact on the course of the operation, since the increased firepower of small arms made the defense insurmountable without suppressing it with artillery fire and accompanying the infantry with tanks. However, at that time we did not yet have such opportunities, which the enemy took advantage of.

During the operation, he continuously transferred reinforcements from non-attacked areas. At first it was two infantry battalions of the 79th Infantry Division from the Belgorod region. They were followed by the 429th Infantry Regiment of the 168th Infantry Division from Oboyan. Further, separate units of the 299th and 62nd Infantry Divisions appeared with tanks. All of them operated with air support.

And on March 24, the enemy threw the 3rd Panzer Division into battle on a narrow section of the front. She launched a counterattack in the direction of the settlement of Rubezhnoye and pushed our units back.

Andreevka is located on the northern bank of the Seversky Donets, west of Balakleya. Shebelinka station is located in Andreevka itself. Two more Shebelinka are located on the southern coast of the North. Donets opposite Andreevka - Les, their opponent was the troops of the 6th Army.

2 Sezsysme 4er 3. Rap2er-Om\$0n Vet-Vgap4enbogr 1935-1945.-5.246-247.

112

Konstantin Bykov

In order to eliminate the consequences of the counterattack, the depleted rifle units of the 38th Army fought for four days in continuous battles with the superior forces of the 3rd Panzer Division and enemy infantry. The fascist German command used massive tank attacks with infantry, supported by artillery fire, bomber and ground attack aircraft. Each settlement was defended by the enemy with a large number of tanks, artillery and mortars.

He tried with all his might to prevent the expansion of the bridgehead we had captured on the western bank of the Seversky Donets River. Attacks by forces of 18-20 tanks with infantry were made up to 8 times a day. From 12 to 18 raids were carried out daily by enemy aircraft. And each time, 15-20 aircraft bombed the battle formations of the army, rear areas and bridges across the river.

Unfortunately, Cessusche 4er 3. Rap;er-P1u1\$10n cannot serve us as a source of details about the tank attacks named by Moskalenko. From the description of the events from March 4 to May 9 given in the history of the 3rd TD, we can draw information related mainly to its preparation for the May battles:

"The main forces of the 3rd Panzer Division were still in the Kursk region at a distance of about 120 km and were preparing for redeployment. A team was sent forward under the leadership of Oberst Westhofen (lesShowen), composed of subdivisions of all units. She left her apartments on March 6 and, overcoming heavy snow drifts, set off on a march in the direction of Kharkov. Two days later, on Sunday, March 8, Major General Bright (Vgeyy) gave the order for a general march.

The next day, an operational group of the division headquarters went to Kharkov, through Oboyan and Belgorod. Here ge-

'
Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 162.

2 Obviously, the forces of one motorized rifle brigade of the 21st Army were not enough to block this road.

113

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Neral Bright introduced himself to Field Marshal Bock, Commander-in-Chief of Army Group South...

On March 4, the weather again raged. It was snowing mixed with rain, and it cleared up only in the afternoon. If a few days ago we groaned from the cold and snow, now we began to curse dampness and rain and thought with fear about the mudslide of the coming spring. This time the wet earth was our ally. When our search group probed the area of Viknin in the first half of the day, it turned out that the village was not occupied by the enemy. Russians. left the settlement due to water intrusion. A lull at the front was established somewhere from April 5th. Needless to say, the shells still whistled and plowed the ground, especially

around Bayrak. Here, for the first time after a long time, defectors again appeared in front of our positions. Were they representatives of the 169th Infantry Division? which has been in front of our division for 14 days.

Now the 3rd Panzer Division, without a special order from above, intended to carry out a reconnaissance of the rear positions and, if possible, equip them. This task was given to Oberst Mikosh (MKozsp), and he energetically set to work. The corps made it clear that there was no need to think about changing the division. Nevertheless, one unit of the 3rd Panzer Division was pulled out from the front that day. The 1st Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, Major Velman (\Ume]tapi, [/5.B.3), who had previously fought in the battle group Challes de Bouillet, was transferred to the 294th Infantry Division (294.1.0.). Together with the riflemen, the 2nd company of the 39th engineer battalion also left the area of its use near Nepokrytaya.

' Viknino was located between Bayrak and Upper Saltov, where the village of Zhovtnevoye is now.

2nd 169th Rifle Division Major General S.M. Rogachevsky was introduced into battle on March 16 after a heavy march on foot. German aviation watered its positions with self-igniting phosphorus (Moskalenko K.S. Decree. Op. P. 162).

114

Konstantin Bykov

(2./R1.39). The withdrawn companies withdrew from their positions and were transported to Kharkov.

The redeployment of Velman's battalion (\UMeShtapp) ended on April 6th. A few hours later, the headquarters of 5.K.394, which had been in continuous use for weeks, was also returned to Kharkov. Oberst Challe de Bouillet handed over the command to Oberst Lieutenant Zimmermann (Saltermann). The general situation at the front somewhat stabilized. The enemy stopped their advance. Only his artillery continued to cover our positions with fire. Fortunately, thanks to the tireless columns of the divisional supply chief (Ola)! Major Feldhus (Re!Vi\$\$) made it possible to deliver ammunition to us. Therefore, the 75th artillery regiment was able to fire. The battery of mortars (Mogzeg-Vatsepe) had all three guns in position and fought heavy Russian artillery at Rubezhnoye (KozNedpoe)? with obvious success.

The next day brought clear weather and, along with it, revived the activity of enemy aviation. Bayrak was subjected to special attacks? The fuel depot of the tank battalion was set on fire. There were no more significant battles. However, the patrol team was able to establish that the Russians were excavating everywhere and keeping their forces in position. Later it turns out that the enemy is regrouping his divisions."

Yet we did something for ourselves. The overfishing group of the Slovak Artillery Regiment, who arrived, established contact with Oberst Lieutenant Dr. Weissenbrach (\ÿe15-

' Ozpai1 (0. Ma.Ei) - Oguzyupz-Maspzsvibyateg - head of the division supply, division supply management.

In the original - KozNed\$poe. Obviously, we are talking about the village of Rubezhnoye, located in the zone of the 169th rifle division on the Soviet Staro-Saltovsky bridgehead.

3 Bayrak is located 4-5 km west of Rubizhne.

* These days, Moskalenko was preparing for the upcoming May offensive, but on April 10 he received an order to transfer several of his divisions, along with their defense lines, to Lieutenant General D.I. Ryabyshev (K.S. Moskalenko, op. op. p. 174). From that day on, the formations of the 28th Army became the enemy of the 3rd TD.

115

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

sepbgasN). The Slovak regiment - a total of 6 batteries - was supposed to release the 75th artillery regiment. At the same time, rumors spread that now the entire 3rd Panzer Division would finally be pulled out.

But the leadership of the division did not yet know anything about this. The intelligence department of the division headquarters ([c), Oberleutnant von dem Knesebeck (d. 4. KpezebesK), had completely different concerns. Russian defectors from the 6th Tank Brigade reported during interrogations the arrival of new troops on the Donetsk Front. In Rubizhne alone, on the last day, 20 tanks were supposed to take their starting positions, including several T-34s. Heavy artillery was also on the way. All this, of course, weakened the hope for a possible change.

On April 9, 1942, spring seems to have finally arrived. The sun shone in the blue sky, as if there was no war. The air warmed up, and the first snowdrops appeared. Unfortunately, the warming of the earth and the melting of snow brought mud and mud. Progress for the supply columns became a torment. Therefore, the sudden appearance of 5 guns of the Slovak artillery regiment in Ternova was perceived as a miracle. At night, two batteries were to be brought up to replace our divisions.

The second surprise of the day was the order of the corps, which read: "According to the order of the higher command, the 3rd Panzer Division is being withdrawn from its positions in echelon and takes up its original position for further use." After that, the corresponding executive orders were issued. Then the battle groups of Major Siervogel (/ Lleguo?e!) And Hauptmann Haspel (Nazre!) Were relieved by the 429th Infantry Regiment of Oberst Gruner (1.K. 429, Stapeg)?). The companies of this regiment arrived on April 9 and in the next 24 hours took positions from both

! Obviously, we are talking about the 6th Guards Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel M.K. Scuba. Defectors could report the appearance at the front of the 28th army of D.I. Ryabyshev.

The 2429th regiment belonged to the 168th Infantry Division.

116

Konstantin Bykov

coupons. K. On April 10, the 3rd motorcycle-rifle battalion of Major Pape (K.Z3. Rare) and the 75th artillery regiment of Oberst Lieutenant Dr. Weisseenbruch (A.V.75, Og. \Ule15\$) were ordered to return eepbgasB)'.

Needless to say, these rearrangements did not occur all at once, and not flawlessly. The Russians inserted their own "words" into this conversation. Against their, though not strong, artillery attacks and search operations, our tank and rifle companies still had to fight. The last units of the 3rd Panzer Division remained in this sector for almost 3 more weeks and arrived in Kharkov only at the beginning of May.

The division headquarters, to manage its renewal, was transferred on April 10 to Kharkov. Oberst Westhofen (Ume\$ouen) took command of the remaining parts of the division between Babka and Donetsk, two battalions of the 23rd Panzer Division, the 226th and 429th Infantry Regiments? and artillery, including the Slovak artillery regiment. The command post was in Vesely?. The reconnaissance detachment under the command of Lieutenant von dem Knesebeck (Ab-{eyipz [s, st. 4. Klezebesk]) was subordinated to the 3rd rifle brigade.

Supply occurred with incredible difficulties, trucks stuck in the mud. Horse-drawn columns had heavy losses in horses, which could not move forward along

swamps and circled.

As early as April 10, Major General Bright (Vgeyv) met in Kharkov in Kharkov with the Quartermaster of the 6th Army, Oberst of the General Staff Pamberg (Ratbeg?) and the commander of the 23rd Panzer Division, Major General Baron von Boiniburg-Lengsfeld .Vote Bige-Hepa). The next day he left for Poltava, where he introduced himself

In the primary source, the surname of the commander of an artillery regiment is indicated in different ways:

2 Regiments belonged to the 79th and 168th Infantry Divisions, respectively.

3 Veseloe is a settlement 20-25 km north-east of Kharkov, near the Soviet Staro-Saltovsky bridgehead, in the zone of the future offensive of the 28th army of D.I. Ryabyshev.

117

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

to the commander of the army group, Field Marshal von Bock (FEM u. Vosk) ... On April 13, Major General Bright, together with his adjutant Lieutenant Liebrecht (Glebgeswu), flew on a liaison plane through Baranovichi to East Prussia. Then, by car, he reached the "Wolf's Lair" - the headquarters of the Fuhrer. First, General Bright was received by the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel-General Halder, and at 14.00 he was already standing in front of Hitler himself. He presented the commander of the 3rd Panzer Division with the well-deserved Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross. In parting, General Bright informed the chief quartermaster, General Wagner, of the need to refresh the 3rd Panzer Division.

The month of April was, to some extent, a "calm" time for the main forces of the 3rd Panzer Division. After they managed to gradually get rid of the enemy, they moved to Kharkov, which in the following weeks became a "garrison city" for the 3rd Panzer Division.

Kharkov is the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic and, with almost 600,000 inhabitants, the fourth largest city in the USSR. Kharkov itself is still young and was founded only in 1654 as a forward post against the Tatars. The city has developed - repeatedly changing owners - into the most important city of Ukraine, and in the 10th century it became a major commercial and industrial metropolis. In 1917 it became Bolshevik, in 1918 it was temporarily occupied by the German army, in 1919 it was again Bolshevik, soon after that it was captured by the White Army and in early 1920 it finally became the capital of Ukraine. If in 1923 the city numbered only 310,000 inhabitants, then in 20 years it had doubled. This is proof of the rise of Kharkov. In the center of the city one can see, above all around "Red Square", huge commercial and administrative buildings that seem to be American'.

"Comrade Colonel," the soldiers of the 13th Guards Rifle Division, burning with the desire to liberate Kharkov, turned to their commander A.I. Rodimtsev. - Is it true that in Kharkov there is a house, for all houses there is a house: it is called Gosprom. It's a pity if we don't keep up, the Nazis can undermine it ... "(Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - P. 235).

118

Konstantin Bykov

In April 1942, life in this big city was of a completely civilian nature. Cafes and cinemas were open, a theater and a cabaret were open, young girls walked on Sundays in their colorful scarves and clothes, and we soldiers almost forgot that a war was raging a few kilometers to the east. The rear units of the division have been stationed in the city since March. Now combat units were gradually arriving here from the front.

Oberst Westhofen (UesFouen), who commanded the division while its commander was on leave, had set up his command post in the northwest of Kharkov since April 13th. Ober Lieutenant Weidlich (U/e1APsV) equipped the division headquarters so thoroughly that, for example, the cartographic department of Oberleutnant Pavlish (Pau[sV) was able to print 10,000 leaflets in Russian in a few days. Near the command post were located the apartments of the headquarters of the 6th tank regiment (R.K.6b), the logistics department of the division headquarters (1), the 83rd field reserve battalion (EEB 83), the 1st company 39 -th communications battalion (1. / M.A.39) and the 1st repair company.

The apartments of the 3rd Rifle Regiment (5.V.Z3) and the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion (A.A.I) were located in the western part of the city, while the apartments of other units were in the eastern part, along the side of the Kharkov and Lopan rivers. The battalions and divisions were located relatively far from each other, and only in the north of Kharkov, in order to guarantee an impeccable supply of the division, were rear divisions (Otai) close to each other).

Back in late March and early April, duty companies had to spend hours shoveling snow that lay on the supply routes, or repairing defensive structures. Now the snow had melted, the roads were free, and the radiant spring sky curved over Ukraine. The companies used at work returned to their regular units, and gradually the regiments, battalions and divisions began to correspond to their classification. Marching battalions arrived from the Motherland, whose officers and rank and file were races.

119

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

divided into different divisions. The 6th tank regiment (R.K.6) received 68 non-commissioned officers and soldiers, the 2nd battalion of the 394th rifle regiment (P./5.K.394) received 2 officers and 109 privates. Now it was necessary to solder the old and young fighters into a single military brotherhood. Along with combat and drill training, there were theoretical exercises, tactical exercises on the ground and, of course, shooting. Repair units worked "rolling up their sleeves" to put weapons, vehicles and property in need of repair in order. What could not be repaired in the front-line workshops was loaded into military trains and sent in the direction of Prague. Only the pontoon-bridge parks from March 26 to April 25 was replenished with 25 trucks, one passenger car and 11 motorcycles. New weapons and vehicles were sent by the motherland to the division. The 6th tank regiment was replenished with 30 R-Sh tanks and 6 R-[U; the artillery also received guns, and now the division's weapons-technical "recovered". Everywhere life was renewed. On April 27, work on the construction of the steam boiler was completed. Supervision of the work of mechanics, welders and painters was carried out by the chief sergeant major Nossinsky (Mozsup \$ K!) and the shirmeister! Braus (Vgam \$). New tanks were tested in the huge workshop of the tractor factory. The 6th tank regiment again had three combat-ready battalions. Majors Frank (EgapK) and Ziervogel (Gleguose!) received one battalion each. The former 1st reconnaissance battalion (A.A.1) was abolished and merged with the greatly weakened 3rd motorcycle-rifle battalion of Major Pape (K..3. Rare). Major Shtreger (U gereg) became Major Frank's heir as commander of the 521st Antitank Destroyer Battalion (P7.7A=.ASh.521). The 75th Artillery Regiment (A.V.75) again has 3 divisions. The divisions consist of: 1st - from 2, Z and 7th batteries; 2nd division - from 4, 5 and

| Zevit - convoy, horse-drawn, harness. eEspite er — the owner of the technical property.

120

Konstantin Bykov

8th batteries; 3rd division - from 1, bi9th batteries. The 1st battalion of the 3rd rifle regiment (1.5.K.3) becomes an armored personnel carrier battalion (5RU/-VazhaShop)!, for which it receives 46 vehicles. The 6th Battery of the 59th Air Defense Regiment (6./E1ak-B 21.59) and the 327th Battery of Artillery Instrumental Reconnaissance (Veob.Vatsepe 327) became a welcome reinforcement.

There was even time to be "civilians" again. Cinema, variety shows and theater were visited, they were supplemented by orchestras in the squares. Soldiers' clubs were opened, and more importantly, trains with vacationers were sent. The first transport left Kharkov on April 16, and then there was not even a week when the soldiers of the 3rd Panzer Division did not leave on a visit. Not

VEBOCOL 82 Im.

R. ,| ; 9

TSNIVIZE, 37 Kyu.

UME Mu.

MEVERA | 28 Km. |

2 Three shattered him: Taj ye >

Quartermaster of the 3rd TD in Kharkov.

| \$P\BaaShop - a battalion of a rifle regiment of a tank division, planted on an ERA! - Espikhepraptegmaewep ("rifle armored vehicles").

121

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

which the soldiers of the division were awarded for their courage in recent weeks. The "German Cross in Gold" was received by: Ober-Lieutenant Mente (Meshe, 5.8.3), Lieutenant 'Schiller (ZspSer, 5.K.394) and Ober-Sergeant Wacker (U\ackKer, R.V.6). However, a special joy for all the soldiers was the message that the capital of the empire, Berlin, from May 8, 1942, takes patronage over the 3rd Panzer Division.

Suddenly, on April 24, the "quiet life" stage of the 6th Tank Regiment (ÿ.ÿ.6) was interrupted by a combat alarm signal. The Soviets had a 120-kilometer wedge-shaped protrusion south of Kharkov into the German front. And now this ledge had to be cleared by the simultaneous offensive of the 1st Panzer Army (1. R7. -Agtee) from the south and the 6th Army from the north. The army command ordered the 23rd Panzer Division, the 71st Infantry Division and the 6th Panzer Regiment to strike together. Even during preparations for this undertaking, the German leadership was aware of the further intentions of the enemy. The Soviets wanted to use their strategically favorable position - to take Kharkov back with a pincer offensive and at the same time crush the entire German front in the industrial region of the Donets.

May 9 - 12, 1942. Termination of the preparation of the 3rd Panzer Division for Operation Friederikus-1. The beginning of the offensive of the northern shock group of Soviet troops. The Staro-Saltovsky bridgehead, which the 38th Army captured in March and which was divided between the 28th and 38th Armies in April, was about 30 kilometers northeast of Kharkov. On May 12, 1942, the offensive of the northern shock group of Soviet troops began from this bridgehead - the 21st, 28th and 38th armies. This grouping, having broken through the German front, was to link up behind Kharkov with the southern shock group, which, also on May 12, launched an offensive from the Barvenkovsky ledge located southeast of Kharkov.

| Sezsyshe 4er 3. Rap2er-Ruuchup Velt-Vtapdep'igv 1935 - 1945. - b. 247 - 263.

122

Konstantin Bykov

&rayvoron te ft tes Chere Titovia 3 ha in 5 esd EfrRemovna, <\\-6ge. 32 cd. 34 meb") Azachya Lo oo | from Kura
= ro vojachansnye "th Dement" [< vba th 5 ds code

` , matzah = a | p.) m, 48 61) "1. tropavlovka

84" a 284 value

MET O from ° I'm Vel Burluk, > Zyvr® about a y6. E r | U \ o / >

& U 87 SA A Kotomlya

384

March

Conventions

day Immediate task — == —Task at the end of the

= Krasnograd

—.—.— Tasks for 6-7 days

The plan to defeat the Germans northeast of Kharkov (according to the book by Rodimtsev).

However, not far from the place where the German line of defense had been breached by the northern strike group, as we already know, there were fresh German formations: the 3rd Panzer, 23rd Panzer and 71st Infantry Divisions. These three formations were destined to play a significant role in our "Kharkov failure" ...

"On May 9, enemy aircraft, with wave after wave of bombardments, launched a new offensive against German positions between the Donets and Babka west of Volchansk!" continue the historians of the 3rd Rap7er-Plwl\$10op.
— Bombs were also dropped on Kharkov and on access roads, introducing

'
As you can see, not only the commander of the 9th Army, Kharitonov, launched the offensive ahead of schedule and in the wrong place (Mayaki). The "premature" (air) offensive also began in the sector of Ryabyshev's 28th Army, which had 46 fighters, 20 attack aircraft and 17 bombers.

123

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

alarm units located here.' No one had yet foreseen the danger that the Soviets would strike a big blow on the morning of May 12th. The Red Army, having concentrated enormous forces, broke through the German defenses, tore apart the front, and, continuously advancing forward from east to west, headed straight for Kharkov.

The division - Major General Bright returned from vacation on May 7 - during May 12 received a telephone message about preparations for the introduction into battle. Oberst Westhofen at 20.00 convened all the commanders at his disposal for an operational meeting. During it, the officers learned that the Soviets had already captured Nepokrytaya, located 20 km east of Kharkov. "The army, in order to neutralize the dangerous invasion, ordered the enemy to counterattack. On May 13, the 23rd Panzer Division was to attack from the south to the the rule of Sary Saltov. The available infantry forces were to concentrate on the starting lines in the Mikhailovka area.

To guarantee the defense of Kharkov, the 23rd Panzer Division is immediately reinforced by the 3rd Panzer Division's battle group. To carry out this task, the 394th Rifle

regiment (5.K.394), which practically did not have vehicles, as they were sent for repair. The leadership was entrusted to Oberst Lieutenant Qi

The activity of Moskalenko's 38th Army in this aviation sector is doubtful. According to the offensive directive of April 28, she had only 40 fighters and 14 night bombers (obviously Po-2). However, front-line aviation (117 fighters, 60 attack aircraft, 20 day and 121 night bombers, 15 DB-3 aircraft) was tasked with: - onov Belgorod, Gotnya, Akhtyrka, Poltava, Krasnograd; cover the approach and concentration of the strike forces of the 28th and 6th armies, paying special attention to the cover of mobile formations. True, on the eve of the offensive, the 38th Army, according to its chief of staff S.P. Ivanov, already had eight aviation regiments: 49 fighters, 37 bombers, 10 attack aircraft and 4 reconnaissance aircraft (Ivanov S.P. Army headquarters, front headquarters. - M.: Voenizdat, 1990. - P. 227).

2 Uncovered was taken by the 226th Rifle Division of the 38th Army.

124

Konstantin Bykov

merman (7llegtapp), because the Oberst Challe de Bouillet (Spaez de Vealech) was on vacation. Already at 24:00, the companies left their apartments and occupied previously equipped positions on the outskirts of the settlement. On the left was the 1st Battalion of the 394th Regiment under the command of Hauptmann Baron von dem Heiden-Rinsch ([./5.V.394, Erg. u. 4. Neudep-VupzsV), on the right - the 2nd Battalion under the leadership Major Peschke (P. / 5.V.394, Ress! Ke), commander of the 83rd field compensation battalion (EEYEV 83), appointed to replace Major Haspel (Nazre!), who is on vacation. Both battalions were assigned one light field howitzer ([e.EN]) and several anti-tank guns to fight the tanks. The 2nd company of the 39th engineer battalion (2./R1.39) is entrusted with the protection of bridges north of Kharkov. Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott (swi-OK) takes command of the reinforced motorized combat group of the 3rd Panzer Division. The following were subordinate to him to complete the task: the 3rd battalion of the 6th tank regiment, Major Ziervogel (Sh. / R.K.6, Gleguouse]), the 1st battalion of the 3rd rifle regiment, Major Velman (T. / 5.V .Z3, \U'eltapp), as well as the 3rd company of the 39th engineer battalion (3./R1.39) and the 1st division of the 75th artillery regiment (1./A.B.75). The battle group was ordered to prepare to march over the next day.

What actually happened? Both opponents wanted to set in motion the front, hardened in winter, by new offensives. As early as April 5, Hitler issued a directive to continue the war. It verbatim says:

"The purpose of the main operation is ... to occupy the front in the Caucasus, advancing decisively, to destroy the Russian forces that are in the Voronezh region and to the south, as well as to the west and north of the Don". The concentration of German troops necessary for this—the main tank forces—was to take place in the areas south of Orel and near Kharkov. At the same time, Marshal Timoshenko, commander-in-chief

' Here the Germans are quoting Hitler's Directive No. 41.

125

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

commander of the Soviet armies, was preparing an offensive in the Kharkov region, with the aim of taking the city and driving back German divisions from Ukraine. The "Red Army", having launched a massive offensive from the west (from the northeast. - Auth.) and south to Kharkov, outstripped the German armies. Northern Strike Team! broke through the front in the 30 km zone that day! The enemy attacked Kharkov with 18 rifle divisions, 2 cavalry divisions and 10 tank brigades. The 294th Saxon infantry division could not stand the onslaught of the Soviet army and retreated to the heights of

east of the Uncovered 2-. The Russians rushed after them, were able to take the dominant height of 198.53 and occupy the villages of Kupyevakha, Dragunovka and Bayrak *, for which they had already had to fight hard before. The Slovak artillery regiment stationed there disappeared. By the evening of the first day of the offensive, the Soviets were already on Babka. Between this river and Kharkov there were no more German troops. Only a few battle groups still continued to hold on to the enemy lines, including Oberst Grüner's group (Cropeg) with units of the 429th Infantry Division (1.V..429) and a few guns in Ternovaya?. In Sick Babka, despite the superiority of the enemy, the 297th Infantry Division (297.1.0.) continued to hold out.

West of Volchansk, the command of the 51st Army Corps (GL.A.K.), under its new commander, Lieutenant General von Seydlitz-Kurzbach (U. Zeud 7-Klg2basp), already at 07.30 on May 12 puzzled the

! Northern strike group - 21st (Gordov), 28th (Ryabyshev) and 38th (Moskalenko) armies.

2? Uncovered (now Shestakovo) was in the offensive zone of the 226th Rifle Division (38A), at its junction with the 13th Guards. sd (28A).

3 This height is located to the west of Uncovered, near the road to Kharkiv.

4 Bayrak was taken by the 680th Rifle Division of the 169th Rifle Division. The advancing regiments of this division were supported by battalions of the 84th Tank Brigade.

> On May 12, this group in Ternovaya was surrounded by the 556th Rifle Division (Major M.M. Alexandrov), the 169th Rifle Division (Colonel S.M. Rogachevsky) and parts of the 175th Rifle Division (Major General A.D. Kuleshev) .

126

Konstantin Bykov

east of Kharkov the 23rd Panzer Division. The next day, she was supposed to strike from the south on the flank of the enemy who had broken through and drive him back beyond the Donets. The 3rd Panzer Division was to vigorously support this counterattack by introducing a battle group of Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott (Sb-OTs) ".

may 13. Introduction to the battle of the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions. Battles with the Soviet 22nd Tank Corps. Withdrawal of the 38th Army. On May 12, all three northern Soviet armies (21st, 28th and 38th) went on the offensive and broke through the German front. At the same time, Moskalenko's 38th army achieved the greatest success. The commander of the troops of the 38th army, burning with the desire to break into Kharkov first, had already suggested to the commander-in-chief Gimoshenko to transfer the center of the offensive to the zone of his 38th army. However, the new reconnaissance data received by the front on May 12 only made it necessary to confirm the old task of the 38th Army—to firmly cover Ryabyshev's southern flank.

“... the aviators detected the accumulation of enemy forces on the left flank of the strike force. True, they reported only two tank formations.” The arrival of three infantry regiments here was established later, - writes about the reasons for stopping the offensive of the army K.S. Moskalenko I.Kh. Bagramyan. - In anticipation of such a maneuver, the commander-in-chief of the direction ordered the commander of the 38th army to withdraw all the forces of the 22nd tank corps from the battle during the night? and concentrate them by the morning of May 13 behind the left flank of the strike

| Cessysche 4er 3. Rap2er-O/uvyup Velt-Vgapdepbige 1935 - 1945. - 5. 263 - 264.

2 The aviators could report tanks, but not the number of tank divisions.

3 Formally, the 36th brigade, the 13th brigade, four rifle divisions were considered the 22nd tank corps. According to other sources, the corps included: the 13th, 36th and 133rd tank brigades, the 51st motorcycle and motorized rifle battalions. In fact, tank brigades were attached to rifle divisions.

127

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

noah group of the army to parry the enemy's clearly indicated counterattack "".

Moskalenko himself writes that on the very first day of the offensive, May 12, he committed all three of his tank brigades into battle. The same day was the last when the commander of the 38th Army mentions the 36th brigade of Colonel T.I. Tanaschishin. Obviously, by May 13, it no longer represented a significant force. On May 13, on the southern flank of the 226th Rifle Division, Major General A.V. Gorbатов, from Roganka to Bolshaya Babka, there were the 13th brigade of Lieutenant Colonel I.T. Klimenchuk, 133rd brigade of lieutenant colonel N.M. Bubnov and the 124th Rifle Division of Colonel A.K. Berestov. Moskalenko deployed the 13th and 133rd brigade along the road from Roganka to Bolshaya Babka, just in the direction of the future strike of the 3rd Panzer Division.

According to German data, the entry into battle of the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions [May 3] did not look very victorious:

"In the morning at 0600 on May 13, the battle group left the city and moved to the northeast. At about 09.30 the indicated initial area was reached in front of Kutuzovka?. Losses began, Russian low-flying aircraft attacked the motorized columns with bombs and airborne weapons. But this did not last long, the Soviet artillery immediately opened fire, and a few minutes later the first G-34 appeared on the left flank. While one tank company takes up a defensive position on the left, the battle group at 11.30 begins an attack on Nepokrytaya.

Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott walked ahead of his ba

Bagramyan I.Kh. So we went to victory. - M.: Voenizdat, 1977. - P. 90. Strictly speaking, the 22nd TC was nominal, its brigade were attached to the SD, participated in the offensive on May 12 and suffered losses.

? Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book I. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 190.

3 Kutuzovka is located to the west of Nepokrytaya, occupied by Soviet troops, on the Kharkov road. Here were the 226th Rifle Division of Major General A.V. Gorbатов and the 36th brigade of Colonel T.I. Tanaschishin. However, according to Glantz's album, the 3rd TD was advancing a little to the south, and its opponents should have been the 124th RD of Colonel A.K. Berestov and the 13th brigade of lieutenant colonel I.T. Klimenchuk.

128

Konstantin Bykov

coupons. Russian shells were constantly exploding among them. And just at that moment, when the commander's car was leaving the forest defile, it received a direct hit. The communications officer, Lieutenant Götze (Coe7e), and the radio operator, non-commissioned officer Rote (EinK-0Y?., Coffee), were instantly killed. The driver, sergeant major Burgmühler (Vigetoler), was seriously wounded. Oberst Lieutenant himself was slightly wounded. Not noticing what happened to the commander, the rest of the tanks continued their work. The 3rd Tank Battalion of the 6th Tank Regiment (Major Ziervogel), evading fire, broke through the hills, ravines and forests further to the east. The 1st Battalion of the 3rd Rifle Regiment (Major Velman) made its way forward more slowly, as enemy combat vehicles and riflemen rushed forward appeared everywhere.

Finally, the wounded Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott was discovered by the adjutant of the regiment, Lieutenant Baron von Funk (Ett. u. EilsK), and taken to the command post of the division in an armored vehicle. After reporting on the situation, the Oberstleutnant returned to his troops. It got dark. The commander only stumbled upon the soldiers of the Saxon infantry regiment! Oberst von Aulek (n. Ashchosk), who reported that our tanks were located to the east. Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott moved on

and suddenly, together with his passenger car and two accompanying motorcycle sheets, he found himself in the middle of the Russians advancing forward. However, Corporal Yesen (Tezzep) did not lose his head and jumped towards the Soviets. This moment was used by others to "fight the roadside bushes". An hour later, having exhausted all their strength, they safely reached Major Ziervogel's command post. Under cover of darkness, the tanks retreated from the already reached heights to the west of Nepokrytaya to elude heavy artillery fire. In the heavy battle of that day, the battle group managed to destroy and seriously damage 23 enemy tanks.

Regiment of the 294th Infantry DIVISION.

2 Sezsysme deg 3. Rap2er-O\\lün Veit-Vgapaenbogr 1935 - 1945. - 5. 265. We assume that these were tanks of the 36th and 13th brigade of the 38th army.

5 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 129

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Moskalenko, who was ordered to take up a strong defense along Bolshaya Babka and prevent the German tanks from breaking through to Stary Saltov, for which he was reinforced by the 162nd Infantry Division of Colonel M.I. Matveev and the 6th Guards Tank Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel M.K. Scooby! from the reserve of the 28th Army, reported that "in the afternoon (May 13), the situation changed dramatically. The enemy has finished concentrating two shock groups. One of them was the 3rd Panzer and two regiments of the 71st Infantry Division, located in the Privolye region. The second, in the Zarozhnoye area, included the 23rd Panzer and one regiment of the 44th Infantry Division. With these forces, the enemy simultaneously launched a counterattack in the direction of Stary Saltov. A strong blow of 370 tanks with infantry and with the support of aviation fell on the troops of the right flank of the army ... The tank brigades immediately entered into single combat with the enemy tanks. They knocked out up to 40 of them and set fire to 35. But they themselves suffered heavy losses.

A clearer picture of the use of their tanks by the Germans is given to us by other participants in the battles on our side.

The commander of the troops of the 28th Army, Ryabyshev: "The neighbor on the left, the 226th Rifle Division of the 38th Army, cleared the villages of Mikhailovka 1st and Chervona Roganka from the Germans. At Chervonaya Roganka, the left flank regiment of the division was suddenly counterattacked by the enemy

Commander of the infantry, supported by 30 tanks - 28th Army D.I. Ryabyshev. mi. The fighters were forced to

So writes K.S. Moskalenko (Decree op. C. 190), but according to D.I. Ryabyshev, these formations remained in the zone of the 28th Army. In addition, Ryabyshev names as the commander of the 6th Guards. tbr then Skubu, then Colonel A.M. Khasina (Ryabyshev D.I. The first year of the war. - M.: Voenizdat, 1990. - P. 195).

* Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 190.

130

Konstantin Bykov

build a village and fortify at a height of 213.2 and in a neighboring grove on the southeast side. As the commander of the 226th Rifle Division reported, at 5 p.m., about 30 tanks and 60 vehicles were moving along the road from Kharkov to Nepokrytaya, which turned onto Novoaleksandrovka. According to him, the enemy was preparing a new counterattack. By the end of the day, German aviation intensified operations in battle formations of units of the 226th Infantry Division. The report of the left neighbor was alarming ... I immediately informed the commander of the neighbor on the left about the events

13th Guards Rifle Division and ordered him to temporarily gain a foothold on the reached line and be ready to repel enemy counterattacks from Cherkassky Tishkov to Petrovskoye and from Novoaleksandrovka to Nepokrytaya.

Rodimiev, commander of the 13th Guards Rifle Division of the 28th Army: "Three hours later we learned that our neighbor on the left, the 226th Rifle Division, commanded by General Gorbатов, repelled the first counterattacks of enemy tanks. First, the Nazis threw from the south to one of the heights defended by the division, 8 tanks, accompanied by infantry. As soon as this attack bogged down, the enemy moved 20 tanks from the west. Met by the fire of anti-tank guns and rifles, the enemy lost 15 vehicles here. The captured Nazis showed that the 3rd and 23rd German tank divisions were deployed on our sector of the front.

May 14. Change of "power" in the air. Capture of Nepokryty by the Germans and attack on the junction of the 38th and 28th armies. "The clock showed 09.45, when the reinforced battle group of the 3rd Panzer Division took up its starting position for a new attack," continues

Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Voenizdat, 1990. - S. 194. There were no German tank units in the Tishkov area, and in the area of Novoaleksandrovka, which is located next to Kutuzovka, there was a starting point for the offensive of the combat group of the 3rd Panzer Division. Novoaleksandrovka and Nepokrytoye were located at the junction of the 28th and 38th armies, which complicated the control of the troops.

2 Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S.238.

131

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

story ŷbessshsSche 4er 3. Rap2er-P1u1z10op. "While the riflemen were defending from the west, the tanks attacked Nepokrytaya from the south. The enemy was defeated, and only in the village did he find sufficient strength to resist. Despite this, around 12.30 the settlement was firmly in our hands. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to strike across the bridges to opposite heights, since all the crossings were destroyed.' The battle group took up all-round defense in Nepokrytaya. Major General Bright ordered units of the 39th engineer battalion (P1.-VI.39) to start building bridges. Contrary to enemy artillery fire, by 18.00 a military bridge? was ready!

The attack, energetically carried out by tanks and riflemen, ended in complete success. In close combat, the enemy was knocked out from the dominating heights. After that, the units prepared for defense. In the following hours, Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott's combat group was relieved by units of the 23rd Panzer Division, which approached Nepokrytaya from Peschanoe?z. The 23rd motorcycle rifle battalion (K.23) joined the Schmidt-Ott battle group.

On this day, May 14, the 3rd Panzer Division, continuing to fight with the 226th Infantry Division of the 36th Tank Brigade, entered the zone of the 13th Guards Rifle Division, where it was supposed to collide with the 90th Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel M.I. Malyshev and, a little later, from the 57th brigade of Major General V.M. Alekseev.

Through the eyes of the participants in the events on our side, the day of May 14 did not yet look tragic, although the instantaneous conquest of air supremacy by the Germans practically put an end to the efforts of the northern group. |

Moskalenko: "On May 14, the situation in the offensive zone

The river of the same name flows through Nepokrytoye, and 3–4 km to the east, the Bolshaya Babka River.

2 Kperz6gasKe, according to Gaube's dictionary, a military or pontoon bridge. 3 Peschanoe is located 4-5 km to the south-east of Nepokrytaya.

4 Sezsyshe 4er 3. Rap2er-Oum13yup Weipt-Vgapdepbige 1935 - 1945. - 5. 265.

132

Konstantin Bykov

EVINZANE\$5SNEASNT OUT\MAVTU SNAVCOM 192

Co.

and/Y5\$0KI] to ZEAERA 7 TUsnikkm

MIUKAMYEO

2. At Razhenya

we M. 5 no. p`. HOW F KAAZZMI || a 4412.44 ^ la ^,*. >. 652 A, C i d AAA, 2: i i A ZASCHAK mea a 294. i no. VI
k al VA KIRZEMASNA "A All) Aa "" 5 5. 2^) = AR , AOBATZSNE\MKA
MESNATSOMKA ,,, Il ha t hell

Scheme of battles in the area Uncovered - Vesele - Ternovaya (from the history of the 3rd TD).

true grouping is even more complicated. The enemy throughout the day tried to develop a strike by a tank group at the junction of the 28th and 38th armies, and in the Peschanoe area to force the river. Big Grandmother. However, the junction was fortified, and this ensured the success of the defensive battles.

133

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The commander of the front, in turn, switched the aircraft of the 6th Army to support the northern strike group. As a result, the 28th Army advanced 6-8 km during the day. It reached the rear line of the enemy on the right bank of the Kharkov River, but could not bring the 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps and the 38th Infantry Division into the breakthrough: they only completed their concentration northeast of Ternovaya on the night of May 15.

Troops of the 38th Army continued to repel numerous attacks by infantry and tanks. By the end of the day, we were firmly entrenched on the eastern bank of the Bolshaya Babka River As for the entry into battle of the 21st and 23rd tank corps! then it was postponed to a later date due to the fact that the aviation that supported our 6th Army, as already noted, switched by order of the front commander to support the northern group.

Ryabyshev: "It was the morning of May 14, the third day of the operation. Reports began to come in from formations... At that time, Nikolai Kirillovich Popel returned from the 6th Guards Tank Brigade of Colonel A.M. Popel told about the feat in the battle for Neskuchnoe of the crew of the tank, political officer of the company F. S. Borisov. In this battle, with fire and caterpillars, the crew disabled up to half a platoon of soldiers, crushed seven bunkers, three anti-tank guns. The tank was hit by a German shell. Enemies surrounded the combat vehicle, but the brave tankers repulsed all attacks, and the wounded driver N.V. Pochuev nevertheless managed to repair the wrecked car and withdraw it from the battlefield...

| The 21st and 23rd tank corps were to be brought into battle in the sector of the southern strike group.

2? Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 191.

3 This quote from Ryabyshev tells us that the 6th brigade was not actually transferred from the reserve of the 28th army to strengthen the anti-tank capabilities of the 38th army, as he told us about it

Moskalenko himself. Although we do not rule out that the 6th brigade was "divided" between the two armies.

134

Konstantin Bykov

The 13th Guards Rifle Division with the 90th Tank Brigade temporarily entrenched themselves at the Petrovskoe line, height 212.3, Rogachevka, and during the day they fought off enemy counterattacks and improved the defense.

Baghramyan: "Enemy aviation seized air supremacy in the morning of May 14... Your next concern was to strengthen the junction of the 28th and 38th armies. On the morning of May 14, the situation here became even more complicated, since it was at the junction of the two armies that the 3rd and 23rd enemy tank divisions sought to develop their initial success. From the report of the headquarters of the 38th army, it turned out that on the night of May 14, units of A.V. Gorbатов with tankers T.I. Tanaschshina (36th battalion - Auth.) again drove the Nazis out of Nepokrytaya, trying to move to Mikhailovka-1. Nov 10 o'clock in the morning, with both of his tank fists, Paulus struck in the directions converging on Peremoga. General Gorbатов, avoiding unnecessary losses, pulled back to the river Bolshaya Babka the units that had previously occupied Necovered. Here his warriors fought to the death and repelled all the enemy's frantic counterattacks.

The threat was also brewing in the zone of the 28th Army, where the guardsmen A.I. Rodimtsev with the support of tankers M.I. Malysheva (90th battalion - Auth.) exhausted all possibilities to hold the junction with a neighbor. The officers of the front headquarters noticed the imminent crisis in time, and the 57th tank brigade of Major General V.M. Alekseev was ordered to nominate Rodimtsev to help the guards. This turned out to be a very necessary and effective measure (the brigade commander died on the very first day. - Auth.).

The 28th Army, stubbornly overcoming the resistance of the enemy, on May 14 advanced another 6-8 kilometers and reached the rear line of the German fascist troops, which ran along the right bank of the Kharkov and Murom rivers....

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 195 - 196.

2 This advance forced the Germans to change their plan: abandoning the attack on Stary Saltov (to the east), they attacked Veseloye (to the north) with both tank divisions, where the Soviet troops were still successfully advancing.

135

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Nevertheless, the overall result of the fighting by the end of the day on May 14 in the zone of the northern group was by no means bleak - the total front of the breakthrough here was 56 kilometers. The troops operating in the center of this group advanced 20-25 kilometers into the depth of the Nazi defense (and already saw the pipes of the Kharkov factories. - Auth.) ...

On the night of May 15, the headquarters prepared a report to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. In it, we stated the undoubted success of the first three days of the offensive. Assessing the results of the battles of the northern strike group with enemy reserves, we noted that, despite the heavy damage inflicted on two Nazi tank divisions, they continued to be a serious obstacle to our troops in their offensive against Kharkov.

In this regard, the document very persistently expressed a request for the allocation of reserves, and above all for the right wing of the front.

The document referred to by Baghramyan? reported that in two days of fighting, on May 13 and 14, our northern grouping at the junction of the 38th and 28th armies lost about 100 tanks. German losses were estimated at 150 tanks.

In fact, it was about the complete destruction of the entire 22nd tank corps of the 38th army, which included the 13th, 36th and 133rd tank brigades scattered throughout the rifle divisions (in total, according to FI, 105 tanks and 20 armored vehicles). The daily losses of this corps amounted to?:

— May 12 (before the German tank divisions entered the battle): Tanaschishin's 36th brigade lost 16 tanks, Bubnov's 133rd brigade lost 2 tanks.

' Bagramyan I.Kh. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1977. - S. 98.

2 Report of the High Command of the South-Western direction to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command on the transition of the troops of the South-Western Front to the offensive in the Kharkov direction and considerations on the further conduct of hostilities dated 15.05.1942.

3 Maxim Kolomiets, Andrei Galushko. Battles for Kharkov in May 1942. // Front illustration, 2000. - No. 6.

136

Konstantin Bykov

- May 13 (on the first day of the entry into battle of German tank divisions, and in the conditions of Soviet air supremacy): 3rd brigade of Klimenchuk lost 32 tanks, 36th brigade of Tanaschishin - 37, 133rd Bubnov brigade - 21 tanks.

On May 14-15, tank brigades of the 28th Army became the enemy of the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions: 84th Colonel D.N. Bely, 90th Lieutenant Colonel M.I. Malyshev, 57th Major General V.M. Alekseev and 6th Guards Lieutenant Colonel M.K. Scuba, which on the eve of the Battle of Kharkov, there were 181 tanks.

We do not know how many of these tanks "survived" before the collision with the German tank divisions. According to FI, by the evening of May 14: "The 84th tank brigade ... suffered heavy losses in the first days of the fighting and by that time had only [3 tanks." And according to Ryabyshev, already on the first day of the offensive, on May 12: "The division commander (Rodimtsev. - 4th Tuesday) reported that the 90th tank brigade (Malyshev. - Auth.) had suffered serious losses. They amounted to 16 tanks: eight T-60s, four KVs and four T-34s. Fortunately, the damage to the new models of tanks was not so great, and during the night they were restored ... "...

In conclusion of the story about the day of May 14, we will give excerpts from the memoirs of two more participants in the battles from the 3rd TD - the commander of the 13th Guards. sd A.I. Rodimtsev and the commander of the 39th joint venture of this division I.A. Samchuk. Since neither the Germans nor Komandarm-28 write anything about the use of tanks in the area of the Rodimtsevo units near Petrovskaya, we have some doubts about the date. Perhaps both Rodimtsev and Samchuk are confusing the events that took place on May 14 and 15. Although this does not mean at all that we blindly trust what was said in Sessichsche et 3. Rap7er-P! u1\$10n, it is difficult to assume that the Germans have preserved complete sets of documents.

Rodimtsev: "20 enemy tanks are rolling out from behind the skyscraper. Turning around in a shallow hollow, they move from Novo-Aleksandrovka to Petrovskoe (in this area

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 187.

137

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

there could have been a Schmidt-Ott battle group or a tank company that Schmidt-Ott left to cover his left flank when he moved to Nepokrytoe. - Auth.). Behind the tanks, almost

closely followed by enemy infantry. Green figurines from a distance seem excitedly fussy. Our shells burst between the tanks. Here are two German cars frozen in place ...

The enemy again threw aircraft into battle. Bombs are exploding in the defense zone of the first battalion. Planes are descending, firing cannons. Another 12 German tanks are attacking Trofimov's guards (commander of the 34th Guards Rifle Division of the 13th Guards Rifle Division - Auth.). But then our heavy tanks rolled out of the Komashnoe tract. A tank battle ensued. Armor against armor, engine against engine... We see the enemy moving backwards. He has more tanks, but our vehicles are much more powerful. And this furious attack of the enemy was repulsed.

By telephone, they report that the division is receiving reinforcements: a division of anti-tank guns and the 22nd anti-tank battalion of the 38th rifle division. Very handy!.. In the area where the defense was held by units of Colonel Yolin (42nd Guards Rifle Regiment), the artillerymen repulsed four tank attacks. Two enemy tanks were knocked out by anti-tank rifles, two companies of German soldiers were dispersed.

We also lost two T-34 tanks from enemy bombs. By the evening, seeing that "I found a scythe on a stone," the Germans stopped their attacks.

No matter how furious the onslaught of the enemy was, I thought that his actions were in the nature of reconnaissance of our forces (obviously, after all, it was one company of Schmidt-Ott. - Auth.). From the prisoners it became known that only separate regiments of the 3rd and 23rd German tank divisions took part in the battles. Obviously, the fascist command intended to inflict a decisive blow on our troops the next day.

Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S. 238 - 240.

138

Konstantin Bykov

Samchuk: "At dawn on May 14! 50 German dive bombers appeared over the positions of the division. The Nazi pilots bombed the battle formations of the guards with great accuracy, since the anti-aircraft and aviation cover of the division was almost absent. After the air raid, the fascist German command threw the 24th Panzer Division into battle, which delivered the main blow in the direction of heights 214.3 and 212.3. The guards, interacting with the 57th tank brigade, did not flinch, met the advancing enemy tanks.

Artillerymen were the first to enter the battle. Direct fire they destroyed nine enemy tanks on the outskirts of the front line. The artillery battery of 45-mm guns of the 34th Guards Rifle Regiment (F.A. Trofimov. - Author), located at a height of 214.3, fired until all the guns failed. To knock out the guardsmen from above, the enemy aimed 15 tanks at the battery. But the gunners fought to the death. The battle was skillfully led by the chief of artillery of the regiment, veteran of the division, Major Semyon Surnachev. In a short time, the batteries destroyed five tanks and up to an enemy infantry platoon.

In this battle, a platoon of anti-tank guns under the command of Lieutenant Pyotr Dmitrievich Nikolenko distinguished himself. The gun crew of junior sergeant Nikolai Ivanovich Vorobyov knocked out two tanks, the crew of the guard junior sergeant Grigory Semenovitch Kriushechev also destroyed two vehicles.

The fight had been going on for several hours. The enemy, regardless of losses, continued to increase the strength of his blows. He brought new tank units into battle. About 50 enemy vehicles, having mastered a height of 214.3, began to enter the rear

' The events described by Samchuk took place on May 15.

2 Obviously, we are talking about the 23rd TD, which struck at the indicated heights on May 15th. On May 14, these heights were part of the 3rd TD. In addition, on May 14, the 57th brigade operated to the north, in the sector of the 244th rifle division, in the direction of the Russian and Cherkasy Tishki. In operational subordination of the 13th Guards. The 57th brigade arrived on May 15 and was immediately sent to the heights named by Samchuk.

139

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

42nd regiment. In this situation, the commander of the guard regiment, Colonel Ivan Pavlovich Yelin, made the only correct decision: in order to prevent the German tanks from breaking through to the rear of the regiment, he advanced his last reserve to meet them - a company of anti-tank rifles under the command of the guard senior lieutenant Kuimov and groups PU submachine gunners with anti-tank grenades under the command of political instructor Trofimenko.

Kuimov's armor-piercers bravely met enemy tanks. Having allowed them to 200 meters, the guards, on command, opened fire in an organized manner. In a few minutes they knocked out nine tanks, and two of them were destroyed by Kuimov.

It was especially difficult for the submachine gunners, headed by political instructor Trofimenko of the Guards: they did not have time to prepare trenches for themselves. Using the folds of the terrain and funnels from gaps, machine gunners lay down in the path of movement of enemy tanks. When 25 armored vehicles with black crosses on board caught up with them, Trofimenko was the first to throw a grenade at the lead tank. The tank caught fire. Following him, three more tanks were knocked out. .

This fierce battle lasted several minutes. On a handful of brave men, the Nazis threw another 15 tanks. Fulfilling their military duty, the entire group of submachine gunners, led by the guards political instructor Trofimenko, died heroically under the tracks of enemy vehicles, but did not retreat a single step.

The same stubborn battles went on in the defense sectors of other regiments of the division. So, against the 39th regiment (Major I.A. Samchuk!, his regiment, having entered the operational subordination of the 28th army, remained to cover the junction between the 28th and 38th armies and could be attacked by a battle group 23rd Panzer Division - Auth.) attacked more than an enemy infantry battalion supported by 25 tanks. Artillerymen of the 32nd Artillery Regiment, commanded by an experienced commander of the Guards

Samchuk's regiment, having entered the operational subordination of the 28th Army, remained to cover the junction between the 28th and 38th armies and was attacked by the combat group of the 23rd Panzer Division.

140

Konstantin Bykov

dii major Klyagin, with massive fire blocked the path of the armored vehicles of the enemy.

The battery of the communist guard senior lieutenant Ivan Pavlovich Syrovatko knocked out eight tanks. However, six vehicles broke through the front line of our defenses. The guards, having passed the German tanks through their battle formations, met the enemy infantry with fire from all types of weapons and almost completely destroyed it. To meet the tanks that had broken through, the commander of the 39th regiment advanced his reserve - a sapper platoon with anti-tank mines. The sappers boldly entered the battle and blew up all six tanks. In this battle, the commissar of the regiment I. I. Morozov was seriously wounded.

In assessing the events that took place on May 14 and which will unfold in the following days, one should proceed from the fact that the tank brigades of the 28th Army, in contrast to the dead brigades of the 22nd Tank Corps of the 38th Army, had to engage in battle with the enemy already in the conditions of its air superiority.

May 15. Changing the direction of the strike of German tank divisions. Bloody battles between old opponents (13th tv. see 3rd td). Retreat of Rodimtsev's division. K. On May 15, after the withdrawal of the 38th Army, the left flank of the 28th Army, on which the 13th Guards. sd Rodimtsev, turned out to be naked. Therefore, the 13th Guards Division (the former 3rd Airborne Division, which had already fought with the 3rd Tank Division during the Kiev encirclement in 194) was forced to build its defenses not only with the front to the west, but also with the front to the south. Moreover, since the day before the Germans attacked the junction of the 13th Guards. sd of the 28th army with the 226th sd of the 38th army, special attention was paid to this particular junction located in the east. Regiments of the 13th Guards. the rifle divisions were deployed from west to east in the following sequence: Trofimov (34th brigade) - near Petrovsky (Petrovka), in the area of height 214.3 (214.1), front to the west; Elin (42nd joint venture) - from

Samchuk I.A. Thirteenth Guards. - M., 1962. - S. 90.

141

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

height 212.3 (which is south of height 214.3) to height 194.5 facing south; Samchuk (39th regiment) - from height 194.5 (which is located north of Nepokrytaia) to Peremoga with a front to the south-southeast (this was the junction with the 38th army).

However, on May 15, German tanks did not strike to the east or northeast, but to the north. Having stumbled upon the solid defense of Rodimtsev here too (39th and 42nd regiments), they turned west and, passing along the southern positions of the 13th Guards. sd (42nd regiment), again turned to the north and attacked the western front of Rodimtsev (34th regiment and the western flank of the 42nd regiment). Here, on the 34th regiment and the flank of the 42nd regiment, from the west and south-west, the second German battle group also struck.

The version of the German side about the battles on May 15 is as follows:

"Somewhat later (at the end of the day on May 14) the entire 23rd Panzer Division was subordinated to Major General Bright (commander of the 3rd Panzer Division. - Author), who received a combat order from the corps to break through with both divisions to the north in order to hit the flank of the enemy forces near Vesely. The enemy still occupied the frontal gap punched in the sector of the 294th Infantry Division. - Russian tanks and riflemen were on the flank of the Schmidt-OTt combat group, the one that posted in the west (i.e. in the direction of Kharkov. - Author) only thin lines of protection (in front of the 34th Trofimov regiment. - Author.). The corps moved the 71st Infantry Division between the 297th Infantry Division and the 23rd TD in Babka to free the Württemberg regiments for the planned attack to the north. The 23rd Panzer Division occupied Nepokrytoye. The battle group Schmidt-Ott from 07.00 (May 15. - Auth.) begins to move to the west, Soviet artillery fire hinders this movement

Veseloie (12 km northwest of Nepokrytoe) was located at the junction of the offensive zones of the 21st and 28th armies. On this day, Vesely, there were the 227th infantry fighting division of the 10th brigade of the 21st army and the 169th infantry fighting division of the 84th brigade of the 28th army. Having defeated the tank forces of the 38th Army and forced it to retreat, the Germans abandoned the continuation of the tank offensive towards Sary Saltov and turned north to neutralize the breakthrough of the 28th Army.

142

Konstantin Bykov

the Schmidt-Ott group went west to their starting area near Kutuzovka and Mikhailovka. Perhaps this movement was mistaken for the withdrawal of the Germans, and 5 heavy Soviet tanks were sent in pursuit of Schmidt-Ott. - Auth.). -

23rd Panzer Division with the 1st Battalion of the 201st Tank Regiment of Oberst Lieutenant von Heidebreck (1G./R.V.201, near NeudebgeskK) and the 1st Battalion of the 126th Rifle Regiment of Hauptmann Neubeck (1 /5.B.126, Meibesk) came out of Nepokrytaia!. After the destruction of those coming towards

enemy tanks? a tough assault on height 194.53 began (the 39th regiment of Samchuk and the eastern flank of the 42nd regiment of Yelin. - Auth.). Since the further march to the north was hampered by many ravines and deep swamps, Oberst Lieutenant von Heidebreck cancels his own decision, turns west (when moving west, the group went parallel to the front of the 42nd regiment. — Auth.) and suddenly appears in the rear of enemy positions at an altitude of 214.3% (the 34th regiment of the 13th division was located here). 16 guns, 7 tanks and 11 anti-tank guns were destroyed. Now the road to the north is open. At about 11.00 the area of heights to the south of Vesely was reached.

It was more difficult for the Schmidt-Ott combat group. Did enemy artillery cover it in the area of concentration? (Obviously, in the area of Mikhailovka. — Auth.). Then the Russian tanks went on the attack. The battalion was forced to stop and was able to

' The composition of the 23rd tank division: 201st tank regiment, 23rd rifle brigade (126th and 128th rifle regiments), 23rd motorcycle rifle battalion, 51st engineer battalion. The remaining units of the 23rd TD had the number 128 (artillery regiment, anti-tank battalion, reserve battalion, communications battalion, rear units).

2 Based on the story of Rodimtsev, which we will give below, these were tanks of the 57th brigade.

3 This height is located in a forest area to the north of Nepokrytaya, in the zone of the 39th joint venture of Samchuk of the 13th Guards. SD Rodimtsev.

* On modern maps - height 214.1. This height is located to the west of the forest, which was bypassed by the 23rd TD. The path to this height lay through the western flank of the 42nd Rifle Division.

> In the 13th Guards. sd included the 32nd artillery regiment of Major V.G. Klyagin and was attached to the 233rd RGC.

143

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

destroy 5 advancing "KV-1" (probably, these were exactly the five heavy Soviet tanks that were sent in pursuit of the Germans, going from Nepokrytnaya to the west. - Auth.). Only at about 11:00 the battle group was able to resume movement. By this time, it was conveniently reinforced by the company of Lieutenant Byuchen (RK 6) and now consisted of more than 40 tanks. The gain of territories due to the stubborn resistance of the enemy was slow. Lieutenant Rodenhauser (KodepWatzeg) and engineer Barwinkel (WagwishKe!) were wounded. Finally, in the region of height 214.3, the advanced combat vehicles met with the 20th Tank Regiment (ŷ.ŷ.201).

Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott turns with his companies to the north, to Veseloye. However, Russian resistance intensified here, and eventually the offensive stopped south of the settlement. The 201st Panzer Regiment, commanded by Oberst Lieutenant Soltmen (So{tapp), uses a better solution, with his 2nd battalion, Oberst Lieutenant Fechner (Eespper), a former officer of the 6th Panzer Regiment, he advances to a height of 200.91 east of Vesely. Winning the height, although it is not a daily task, he succeeds.

On this day, Major General Bright met with General of the Panzer Troops Paulus (Sepega | 4. R7.Tr. Raul \$) and Hitler's senior adjutant, Major General Schmundt (Sepegazpa] og Zsptipa®. It was planned that on the night of 23- The Panzer Division will concentrate in its initial position for an attack to the east, while the battle group Schmidt-Ott will continue its offensive to the north.

On this day, the Germans managed to defeat the 13th Guards

' This height (on modern maps - 200.7) is located between Vesely and Ternova, where the German garrison was surrounded by Soviet troops.

2 Sezsyshme 4er3. Rapgeg- Op Velt-Vgapdepbige 1935 - 1945. - 5. 266. To the east - to unblock
Ternovaya surrounded by Soviet troops. To the north - cut off the successfully advancing Soviet formations
of the right flank of the 28th and the left flank of the 21st armies.

144

Konstantin Bykov

rifle division. History repeated itself. On May 13, a blow was struck on the flank of the 124th Rifle Division, which, retreating, exposed the flank of the 226th Rifle Division to attack. Retreating .. 226th Rifle Division exposed the flank of the 13th Guards. rifle division, and the Germans set about Rodimtsev. Having retreated and, obviously, having lost both of their tank brigades (90th and 57th), [3rd Guards cleared the way for a strike on the flank of another victim ... It was a typical

tea and a typical result of flank strikes: a division retreating from such a strike either retreats within the strip cut by it and thereby opens the way for the enemy, or retreats into the zone of its neighbor, mixing rears, troops and command and control ...

The last records of Rodimtsev and Samchuk about their participation in the battles of the northern group with the German tank divisions date back to May 15 and 16.

Rodimiev: "Early in the morning (May 15. — Auth.) a report was received that from Nepokrytaya to Kharkov, a withdrawal of enemy vehicles was observed (the Schmidt-Ott battle group was leaving for the initial area to attack. — Auth.).

Our 90th tank brigade was supposed to cut off the enemy's escape routes by attacking Mikhailovskaya. Five heavy tanks with a landing company twenty minutes later set out to complete the task.

It was soon reported that in the area south of Mikhailovka the First, the enemy had concentrated a large number of tanks (the area was the starting point for the Schmidt-Ott battle group. - Auth.). This got us thinking. Will our tank company face superior enemy forces?

It was not possible to contact the company commander by radio. It remained to wait and try again to establish a connection.

The morning of May 15 was unusually clear, quiet and serene. The birds in the forest, still dark, began their discordant concert...

... Chief of Staff Borisov reported that a large concentration of German tanks was also seen in the area southwest of Peremoga (the combat group of the 23rd Panzer Division was preparing to attack Samchuk's 39th regiment. - Auth.).

145

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

"Parisians," he said with a grin. - Imagine, the 23rd Panzer Division, it turns out, arrived here directly from Paris. We have less comfort here, and the captured fascists are unhappy. Missing restaurants and cafes...

"I'm sure," Zubkov remarked, "that we have enough strength to deal with these as well. There is no doubt that the Germans are going to attack. No wonder they threw so many tanks here ...

...About noon, a young, energetic colonel, the commander of the 57th tank brigade, appeared at the division headquarters (all sources, American and Soviet, indicate that the 57th brigade was commanded by Major General V.M. Alekseev. - Author .). He clearly reported that the brigade had been transferred to the operational subordination of the command of the 13th Guards Division, reported on the combat composition of the brigade and asked to get acquainted with the situation.

The arrival of the brigade was a great joy for us. It was especially gratifying to hear that the brigade had 10 heavy tanks. During the eleven months of the war we never saw a German gun penetrate the armor of this tank. It happened that the car received a lot of dents from enemy shells, but continued to go to battle.

Our conversation was interrupted by a call from regiment commander Ivan Samchuk. He reported that the Germans were pulling up tanks and infantry to the front line. From his observation post one could see how the enemy troops were moving from Nepokrytaia and concentrating in the beams. Our gunnery observers counted over a hundred enemy tanks and armored personnel carriers there (according to the Germans, there were the 1st battalion of the 20] 1st tank regiment of the 23rd tank division and the 1st battalion of the 126th rifle regiment of the same divisions. - Auth.).

— How did you prepare to repulse a tank attack? I asked.

Ivan Anikeevich's voice sounded calm, confident:

All unit commanders have been warned. Pro

146

Konstantin Bykov

anti-tank weapons, and especially artillerymen, were tasked with repelling tank attacks.

- Strengthen the commander's system of monitoring the behavior of the enemy.

- Yesty!

After that, I continued the conversation with the brigade commander:

"So, Comrade Colonel, we are all glad to see you. With your tanks, the division becomes stronger than before. Head to the brigade and occupy the starting line. Time does not wait: the enemy is about to attack.

He replied with a confident smile:

Let them try...

... The destinies of people in war develop differently: one will go through fire and water, remain alive under an enemy tank, come out of a deadly battle without a scratch, the other, as soon as he sets foot on the front line, is already slain.

I saw the young commander of the 57th tank brigade then for the first and last time. When he returned to the tankers, the fascist planes made another raid. Mortally wounded, he managed to give a combat order to the chief of staff and even drew an arrow of a counterattack on the map with a weakening hand ...

... This morning, the regimental commanders were configured differently. Samchuk was preparing to repel an enemy tank attack, Yelin was impatiently waiting for a message from the landing company, thrown with five heavy tanks to intercept the retreating part of the enemy, peacefully minded Trofimov preparing for the meeting.

These moods to some extent reflected the situation in different sectors of the front. Weighing it, I thought: "Have the Germans launched an attack today?" Usually, before the start of active operations, their scout continuously circled over our positions. And today he showed up in the morning, hung over the front line and disappeared. Apparently, the Nazis had not yet completed the regrouping of their forces.

However, as we understood later, the Germans tried to deceive us. They removed the reconnaissance aircraft, their artillery at

147

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

was quiet, even the machine-gun fire had stopped. Somewhere in the location of our neighbors, the muffled peals of the bombing ceased. And an amazing silence reigned over the front line.

Exactly at 13.30 on the combat formations of our artillery, on the regiment of Major Samchuk buried in the ground, a hurricane barrage of fire from enemy guns and mortars hit. Almost simultaneously with the beginning of this powerful artillery preparation, several sixes of Yu-88 bombers appeared in the sky. Perhaps only near Kiev and Konotop did we experience such a powerful bombing strike.

It is possible that the Nazis spotted the location of our observation post. The planes slowly turned over us and dropped their deadly Cargo.

"I'm repelling tank attacks!" Samchuk shouted into the phone. There are more than fifty of them...

The tube was silent. The ground shook under my feet, the pipe ripped from my hand. It became dark all around. Breath intercepted, I fell. Overhead, a beam broke off with a crack, something heavy hit his shoulder. With difficulty he got to his feet. Bombs burst and exploded around with a deafening roar...

... The lieutenant - signalman ran in:

— Comrade Colonel... communication lines have been cut by enemy aircraft. Regimental commanders can only be contacted by radio.

"Take action to restore communication immediately!"

"All communications officers, except for me, are out of action. Four were killed, the rest were wounded. But I will do everything..."

- Act!

The dust settled, and a picture of the battle opened before me.

An enemy tank avalanche rushed from the direction of Mikhailovka to Petrovskoye (it was the battle group of the 3rd TD under the command of Schmidt-Ott. - Auth.). At least 60 tanks were moving, followed by motorized infantry on transporters. There were a lot of transporters, at least a hundred, followed by tanks again in small groups.

We have never had to repulse such an armada. stand

148

Konstantin Bykov

whether the guards? His bruised shoulder ached painfully, but his mind, as always in the decisive moments of a battle, worked calmly and clearly. |

The lieutenant-signaller in some roundabout way connected me by telephone with the commander of the 39th regiment, Samchuk.

"The guards stand to the death," said Samchuk sternly and solemnly. "We are suffering heavy losses. Many killed. The tanks are ironing the trenches, but no one has retreated. Let's fight off the attack, comrade

Colonel!..

The intention of the Nazis was clear: they wanted to return the recently lost strongholds of Ryazanovka, Krasny, Peremoga, Gordienko and push the division back across the Babka River.

The battle lasted for more than two hours, enemy aircraft bombed our battle formations again and again, but the guards, using their anti-tank weapons and 82-mm mortars, threw the enemy away from their positions.

A group of German tanks managed to break into a height of 194.5 (Samchuk's regiment and part of Elin's regiment. - Auth.), Here she landed troops. 30 tanks of this group moved around the Perekopsky tract from the west and collided with the guards of our 32nd artillery regiment. The gunners fired point-blank, but two of our guns, together with the crews, were crushed by the tanks. The Nazis lost 8 cars here and turned around the Perekopsky tract, now from the north.

Enemy attempts to suppress other batteries of this battalion in the area of the Kruglik tract were repulsed by our artillery fire.

The second group of German tanks in 30 vehicles attacked the third battalion of our 42nd regiment. The Nazis tried on the move to break through the defenses along the edge of the Komashnoe tract, but were repulsed. They called in aviation, attack aircraft began to bomb and fire at the positions of the battalion. The enemy motorized infantry, dismounting, followed the tanks into the attack. The machine-gun and automatic fire of the guards soon pinned her to the ground. Another battle with tanks. The gunners again fired point-blank and destroyed ten enemy tanks.

149

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The Hitlerite command was confident in the superiority of its forces and did not consider losses. It threw a third group of up to 60 tanks at the 42nd Guards Regiment, but the vehicles of our 90th Tank Brigade rushed towards this avalanche. Two streams of steel clashed, cannons roared, machine guns fired. Enemy aircraft circled over the battlefield, no longer throwing bombs: in a fierce battle of powerful mechanisms, in tornadoes of dust and smoke, it was not possible to distinguish

where are our tanks, where are the German ones.

Up to a dozen enemy vehicles broke into the location of our batteries. Many of them were shot at point-blank range by the guardsmen, but all defense guns, except for one, 45 mm, were crushed. The guards company, which occupied the area of three mounds, spending the last ammunition, withdrew to the Komashnoe tract. Neither tanks nor infantry of the enemy managed to break into this forest.

Convinced that it was impossible to break the resistance of the 42nd Guards Regiment, the Germans turned north and attacked in the open field the second battalion of the 34th Regiment of the neighbors and the battery of our 32nd Guards Regiment. Seeing how the space between the groves inside the disposition of our division was gradually filling up with enemy motorized infantry, I ordered Barbin to fire several artillery salvos at this area. He gave the command to the batteries, and a hundred shells dispersed the concentration of fascists. ^

The fascist command was beating its head against a wall, trying to find a weakness in the lines of our defense. He failed to encircle and destroy our battalions in the open field: fighting a heavy battle with enemy tanks, the guards retreated into the forest. Then the Nazis, realizing the futility of their attacks, began to regroup two tank divisions, aiming them at the defense sector of the regiment of Ivan Pavlovich Yelin. Chief of Staff Borisov immediately reported this to the commander of the 57th tank brigade, which was in the forest at the location of the 42nd regiment.

Soon, two Nazi tank divisions resumed their offensive.

150

Konstantin Bykov

An unusual enemy aviation formation appeared above the battle formations of Yelin's regiment - one hundred aircraft! A few minutes later, two enemy bombers, engulfed in smoke and fire, crashed into the ground in front of our trenches.

The rest began to disperse. But then one of them caught fire and, falling apart in the air, collapsed behind the Dolzhik tract.

Colonel Yelin reported that 80 tanks and up to two enemy infantry battalions were moving against his regiment. Following him, Klyagin informed Barbin that his gunners had knocked out 28 fascist tanks, but the enemy aircraft disabled almost all artillery crews, leaving only four guns that could fire.

Suddenly, the German bombers again went to our observation post. The earth shook from the explosions of bombs and shells. Sending orders became impossible.

I barely heard the voice of the Chief of Staff of the 57th Tank Brigade on the telephone. He reported that the brigade commander was killed, the commissar was seriously wounded. Eight tanks were on fire from enemy bombs. He asked what he should do.

I could only answer one thing:

- Fight and not let enemy tanks into the depth of defense.

But he, apparently, had already lost control: soon the remaining tanks of this brigade became depart.

At first we did not understand whose tanks they were. What if the enemy broke through to Peremoga, to the rear of Samchuk?.. If the battle formations could not hold back a tank attack, then something terrible had happened...

... We found the headquarters of the regiment without much difficulty. It was located in one of the peasant yards, under a canopy made over the cellar.

Major Samchuk, in a torn tunic, dusty, ran out to meet him and began to report on the progress of the battle, but I interrupted him:

- Have you seen a group of tanks moving towards your rear?

151

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

- From where, on the left? These are ours, from the 57th brigade.

Who gave the order to leave?

He shrugged.

Probably their leader...

I was relieved from the heart.

- Please stop the tanks and send them into battle. Suppress enemy machine guns in front of your defenses.

- Eat...

... The situation on our sector of the front became more and more complicated. The guards fought desperately and selflessly, holding back the onslaught of a brutal enemy. They have already knocked out 43 German tanks. The vehicles blackened on the battlefield in different positions — now rearing over the trench, now hanging on the edge of a ravine, now burrowing into a ditch along the road.

Only by 4 p.m. did the duel of our tanks with the fascist tanks in front of the defense of the Samchuk regiment begin to subside: the enemy did not achieve results and abandoned frontal attacks. But in the area where Elin's regiment was located, a fierce battle was still going on. The guards fought off repeated attacks of enemy tanks and motorized infantry with great effort. I decided to visit this regiment.

In the center of the village of Peremoga, I met Ivan Pavlovich with Commissar Oleg Kokushkin. They went to a new command post east of the village (in other words, Elin's 42nd regiment retreated to the east — Peremoga is located on the eastern bank of Bolshaya Babka; and in the west, in the Petrovsky area, only Trofimov's regiment and part of the artillery regiment 13 th division. - Auth.).

I advised them to set up a new command post in the northern part of the village. It will be more convenient to lead units, and it will be closer to Samchuk (which means that Samchuk's regiment has moved beyond Babka. - Auth.)...

... Knowing that the regiment of Filipp Alekseevich Trofimov was fighting an unequal and very difficult battle (immediately against two battle groups of the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions. - Auth.), I hurried to the observation post.

152

Konstantin Bykov

Colonel Barbin met me. Usually calm, balanced, now he was noticeably excited:

— Comrade Colonel! The main enemy group, bypassing the right flank of the Klyagin artillery regiment, moved in the direction of the settlement of Ternovaya (this, obviously, was the moment when both battle groups - the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions - broke through the junction of the 42nd and 34th regiments to Vesele, while one of the battle groups went to the heights near the Vesele - Ternovaya road. - Auth.). Thus, Trofimov's regiment with two artillery batteries was cut off from the units of the division. There is no communication with the regiment ...

I ran into the dugout, grabbed the telephone receiver. As if trying to stop me, an artillery shell exploded nearby. Clay and dust fell. The head of communications of the division Kostyurin answered:

- Comrade Colonel, the connection of our observation post with the regiments has been restored, except for Trofimov's regiment ...

- He needs to be contacted. And immediately. Now give Borisov...

Vladimir Aleksandrovich reported that the 57th and 90th tank brigades were fighting. During my absence, the commander of the army called and demanded that all measures be taken not to let the fascist tanks through the battle formations of the division.

"We are doing this, Vladimir Alexandrovich!

Kostyurin called again: five of our heavy tanks with a company of paratroopers, sent in the morning to intercept the retreating part of the enemy, did not return. The T-34 tank sent to them for communication also did not return. Our pilot-observer saw how a tank battle was going on behind enemy lines, on the road from Mikhailovka Pervaya to Kharkov. Many tanks were on fire. Obviously, our brave tankers, along with the landing force, died in an unequal battle ...

... The guards under the command of Trofimov resisted. Before evening, I ordered the tankers of the 90th brigade and the landing company of machine gunners to break through to the floor

153

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

ka Trofimov and help him get out of the forest to the border of the river Babka.

This blow for the Nazis was unexpected. It was already dark, Trofimov's regiment, waging a tense battle with the enemy's motorized infantry, left the encirclement and took up defense along the Babka River.

By evening, the attacks of the Nazi troops were repulsed. On the sector of the front, which was occupied by the division, the enemy failed to break through the battle formations "...

Unfortunately, the battle between the 13th Guards. sd, 90th tank brigade, 57th tank brigade on the one hand and battle groups of the 3rd and 23rd tank and 71st infantry divisions on the other hand - this is the same case, ambiguous in history, when both opponents - successfully completed the tasks assigned to them. Rodimtsev did not allow the Germans to break through the old front line of the 28th Army in the area of Bolshaya Babka. And Bright, not intending to break through this line, led his battle groups to Vesely ...

Samchuk: "During May 15 and 16, the Nazis, trying to achieve success, threw at the positions of the 13th divisions more and more tank units ...

... Enemy tanks went to the firing positions of the batteries of the 1st division (guard captain Ivan Ilyich Krikliy) from three sides. The reconnaissance observer reported that more than 80 vehicles and up to a company of the Nazis were entering the flank of the 42nd regiment. Captain Krikliy shot the main lines in the morning, where it was most convenient to destroy German tanks. Gunners at the guns calmly watched the approaching enemy. The gunners prepared to adequately meet the Nazis.

The battalion commander Krikliy appeared on the firing positions, stern, calm, confident. When the tanks were less than 800 meters away, he gave the command, and the batteries opened fire in volleys. Enemy vehicles fired cannons and machine guns.

Everything around was shrouded in smoke. The fight lasted over 20 minutes.

! Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962. - S. 241 - 253.

154

Konstantin Bykov

many tanks were on fire, while those that remained unscathed were slowly moving forward. The distance was shrinking. Enemy vehicles approached so much that the soldiers began to be hit by fragments from the shells of their howitzer batteries, which hit enemy tanks from covered positions. Here is an enemy shell hit the boxes of ammunition. Shovels flashed quickly, and the flames were doused. And the gunners, not looking up for a minute from the panoramas, sent shell after shell into the sides of enemy vehicles.

The gun commander of the communist guard corporal Lychak, and the gunner Belousov, and the gun commander of the communist guard sergeant Sukhovoi, and the gunner Zyunev fought bravely with the Nazis. But the commanders of the firing platoons of the party organizer of the battery of the guard, lieutenant Shashin and the guard, junior lieutenant S.P. Gorlov, who acted as gunners in this battle, especially distinguished themselves. Each of them destroyed four tanks.

This victory was not easy. Many of the artillerymen died the death of the brave, many were wounded. It was necessary to have truly great courage to withstand the onslaught of the enemy's steel machines. But the guards survived - the fascist tanks did not pass. 32 warped, burned-out vehicles remained on the battlefield.

Captain Krikliy of the Guards was seriously wounded, but remained until the end in the positions of the 1st battery, which took the brunt of this battle. For skillful leadership of the battle, for personal courage and heroism, by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of June 2, 1942, Captain Ivan Ilyich Krikliy was the first in the Soviet Union to be awarded the Order of the Patriotic War [degree.

In the morning, the commander of the 1st Battery of the Guard, Senior Lieutenant I.M. Bykov watched the battlefield from his observation post. When the first enemy tanks appeared on the horizon and, skirting the birch grove, went to the artillery positions, Bykov crossed the gully and quickly walked towards the firing positions...

- Are there armor-piercing ones?

155

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

- Enough, two cars were brought at night ...

...The first enemy vehicles appeared from behind the hill. They marched in a deployed formation in two lines, with open hatches, they walked cautiously, as if looking out for hidden Soviet anti-tank guns hidden in the young, spring greenery.

Bykov did not take the black crosshairs of his binoculars off the steel vehicles. Here they are 900, 800, 700 meters away.

The nerves of the guards were strained to the limit. The gunners froze at the panoramas.

- The first - on the head, the second - on the commander's santenna, the third - on the shooter ... fire! - came the command at last. The guns fired a volley, followed by another, then a third... The lead vehicles flared up like torches.

The gunner Belousov knocked out the third tank, but, wounded by a fragment of an enemy shell, fell near the gun shield. His place was taken by the commander of the guns of the guard, Sergeant Lychak. He shot fascist tanks like a sniper. In total, in this battle, the fearless commander destroyed six machines.

Enemy shells were bursting at the firing positions. Clods of earth and fragments flew in all directions, literally falling asleep to the gunners. Among the continuous roar of explosions and the whistle of shells, the calm voice of the battery commander was heard. He inspired people, supported in them an unshakable confidence in victory. The gunners Kutaev and Kulinets, Lieutenant Kryndich of the guard, Zyunev, a Komsomol gunner, and Smirnov, the gun commander, had already knocked out eight enemy tanks.

But the enemy stubbornly rushed forward. Battery commander Ivan Bykov and commissar Lemeshko were wounded. But even the wounded, they did not leave the battery, they continued to control the fire. Following their example, the wounded gunner Kutaev, the correct Ogonyan, the shell carrier Bashirov, having hastily bandaged their wounds, accurately worked at the guns.

One gun failed, then another, but the rest sent shell after shell into the enemy vehicles.

The battle lasted over three hours. Bykov's battery knocked out and

156

Konstantin Bykov

burned 26 tanks and one armored vehicle. The Nazis could not stand the fight with the Soviet artillerymen and retreated.

To repel the frenzied onslaught of enemy tanks, commanders were needed with nerves of steel, enterprising, able to lead fighters, and fighters were needed, fearless, courageous, steadfast, quickly, accurately and skillfully carrying out the orders of their commanders. And such were Major Klyagin, Commander of the Artillery Regiment of the Guards, Captain Kriklii of the Guards, Senior Lieutenant Bykov of the Guards, and many other artillery commanders of the 32nd Guards Regiment. They managed to inspire their men with such confidence in victory that the fighters calmly shot down enemy tanks even when they approached at a distance of 15-20 meters from the guns. Dozens of Nazi vehicles were turned into scrap metal. In just one day, May 15, 1942, the 13th division destroyed 43 tanks.

For the heroism shown in this battle, by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of June 3, 1942, Senior Lieutenant Ivan Mikhailovich Bykov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, and many soldiers and commanders were awarded orders and medals. : Guards Private Zyunev - the Order of Lenin, Guards Senior Sergeant A.V. Smirnov - Order of the Patriotic War [degrees, Guards Private A.I. Kulinets - Order of the Patriotic War II degree.

As a result of the three-day battle, the enemy lost 113 tanks only from artillery fire. The unheard-of battle between artillery and enemy tanks, never seen before in the division, was won. The battle ended with the victory of the guards, the victory of organization, skill, courage and stamina. And this is the great merit of the artillerymen of the division.

The 24th tank division of the enemy suffered a severe defeat, after which the German fascist command did not take decisive action against the guards (Samchuk mistakenly calls the 23rd tank division the 24th. - Auth.).

Based on the combat order of the commander of the 28th ar

157

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

In the second half of May, the 13th Guards Rifle Division occupied the line of the left bank of the river Babka, Peremoga, Oktyabrsky, Fedorovka, where it defended until the morning of June 10, 1942 ""...

16th of May. Breakthrough of the Germans in Ternovaya. So, the day of May 15 is over. 13th Guards Rifle Division Colonel A.I. Rodimtseva retreated. Combat groups of the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions, breaking through to Veseloy, in the second half of the day entered into battle with units of the 244th and 169th rifle divisions.

The location of the troops of the 28th Army of Ryabyshev north of the 13th Guards. sd looked at this point in time as follows (from south to north):

- 244th Infantry Division of Colonel M.S. Istomina (907, 911 and 914th joint venture) broke far to the west and was in the area of Russian Tishki. 57th Tor Major General V.M. Alekseeva, who supported the division in this breakthrough, had already been "used up" in the band of the 13th Guards. sd;

- 169th Infantry Division of Colonel S.M. Rogachevsky (434th, 556th and 680th Rifle Regiments), which at the beginning of the offensive was supported by the 84th Tank Brigade of Colonel D.N. Bely, also broke out far to the west and was in the Liptsov area;

- The 175th Rifle Division under Major General A.D. Kuleshov (560th, 632nd and 728th Rifle Divisions), despite not having tank support, also advanced successfully and was located in the area of the village of Lukyantsy.

In the second echelon of the 28th Army were the 38th Rifle Division of Colonel N.P. Dotsenko, who was connected, surrounding the Germans in Ternova, and the 162nd Rifle Division, Colonel M.I. Matveeva, who will soon be ordered to go to the rescue of the 244th Rifle Division, advancing in its lane. The success development group of the 28th Army consisted of the 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps, Mayo General

Samchuk I.A. Thirteenth Guards. - M., .1962. - P.90 - 95.

158

Konstantin Bykov

ra V.D. Kryuchenkova (5th, 6th Guards and 32nd Cavalry Divisions), the 6th Guards Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel M.K. Skuba and the 34th motorized rifle brigade of Colonel K.I. Ovcharenko.

Merry, to which the Germans reached on May 15, was located at the junction of the 244th and 169th rifle divisions. And the junction was bad - it was not in front of the front, but in the deep rear of both divisions that had gone far to the west, and the Germans' exit to this junction - from the side - did not bode well ...

"The commander of the 244th division reported," Ryabyshev wrote about the actions of May 15, "that the formation had captured the heights of 1481 and 183.3 and secured themselves on their western slopes near the eastern outskirts of the village of Russian Tishki. However, a very dangerous situation developed on the left flank of the division. While the 914th regiment of the division advanced significantly to the west, its left neighbor, the 34th Guards Regiment of Rodimtsev's division, left the village of Petrovskoye, height 214.3, under heavy enemy attacks and thus exposed the flank of 914 th regiment and rear of the 244th division. I ordered Colonel Istomin to place the 911th Regiment on this sector open to the enemy and to occupy its units with a front to the south, towards Petrovsky and height 214.3. It seemed to me that we would be able to fend off a sudden blow from the enemy in this sector.

Historians of the 169th Rifle Division classically assessed the situation that had arisen: "Their (German tanks) blow turned out to be so strong that the left-flank 244th Rifle Division was forced to start a retreat, thereby opening the flank of the 169th Division"? . Classically, but not entirely true, the escape routes for Istomin's 244th Rifle Division were cut immediately...

About what happened next, on May 16, the Germans tell:

"At night, around 02.00, there is a concentration of the group

Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 198.

2 Kachur V.P., Nikolsky V.V. Under the banner of the Sivash. M.: Military Publishing, 1989. - S. 55.

159

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

in original position. This time Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott plans to go to Veseloye not from the south, but from the east. However, enemy artillery! timely reveals this plan and sets fire to the first German fighting vehicles before the attack begins. Despite this, tanks, gunners-motorcyclists and armored personnel carriers began to slowly move towards the Russian positions equipped with anti-tank guns. Every meter of land was mined in a tough fight with the Soviets. Suddenly, the 23rd motorcycle rifle battalion stumbled upon the still intact bridge over the Murom. Rifleman-motorcyclists immediately cross the river and find themselves in the rear of the Russians. Now the hour has come for the approaching 1st Battalion of the 3rd

Rifle Regiment Major Velman (1./5.K.3, \eStapp). The arrows, having passed into the settlement along the bottom of the stream, penetrated into the first huts, which the enemy fled. The combat vehicles following them were able to knock out one KV-1 and four G-34s. After that, Veseloe firmly passed into the hands of the combat group2.

The Soviets set fire to the former German food supply depot while fleeing, but still the warriors rushed to save "what could still be saved." Then there was a stupid failure. The Shtuk group, which had not been notified of the rapid capture of the settlement, unloaded their bombs on the already badly damaged houses. Fortunately, personal losses were not too great. In the afternoon, the battle group occupied the heights north of Vesely, and forced the enemy to finally withdraw along the Murom valley (i.e., to the northeast, to Neskuchnoye, to the west of which the 169th rifle division was located; in addition, Neskuchnoye was rear junction of the 169th and 175th divisions - Auth.).

Perhaps it was the 307th artillery regiment of Major G.G. Baklai, who was on the left flank of the 169th Rifle Division. In Vesely itself there was the 434th regiment of the 169th division. Unable to withstand the impact of 80 tanks with motorized infantry, the regiment withdrew to the northeast, to Neskuchnoye, where it entrenched itself (Ryabyshev, p. 205).

2 On this day, according to the atlas of Glantz, the 84th brigade was located in the area of Vesely.

160

Konstantin Bykov

The 23rd Panzer Division, advancing to the east, overcame stiff resistance along the road to Ternovaya. Ober-lieutenant Fechner (Eespper) with his 2nd battalion of the 201st tank regiment (P./R.KV.201) liberated the regimental group of Oberst Grüner, which had been encircled here earlier! However, the joy did not last long. Somewhat later, the Russians attacked with large forces and surrounded Ternovaya a second time. This time, the 2nd Battalion of the 201st Tank Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 126th Rifle Regiment found themselves in this small "cauldron" along with the 429th Infantry Regiment.

Major General Bright ordered the next day (May 17. - Auth.) parts in Ternovaya - to the north-west. Both groups were to link up in the Murom valley and cut off the Russians east of Vesele, in order to continue their own offensive later. However, the 23rd Panzer Division was unable to participate in this enterprise.

Commander-28 D.I. told us about how German tanks broke through to Ternovaya. Ryabyshev:

"The commander of the 169th Infantry Division soon reported that, having passed Veseloye, the German tanks had split up. One column - about 30 tanks and 20 vehicles with infantry - moved to Ternovaya in order to break through to the garrison surrounded there from the northeast; another column, also up to 30 tanks, headed for a height of 226.3, intending to break through to Ternovaya from the south and release the troops surrounded in the village by our units.

I knew that at height 226.3 there were battle formations of the 1st and 3rd battalions of the 29th regiment of the 38th rifle division. Soon they reported from there that the soldiers met the enemy tanks with friendly fire of artillery and anti-tank guns. Having lost six tanks, the Nazis turned north,

| SezsysMe 4er 3. Rapneg-Ot\sup Ve t-Vgapapbigya 1935 - 1945. - \$. 267.

6 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 161

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

connection with the first group approaching Terno-VOY.

This first group of tanks soon attacked the 2nd battalion of the 29th regiment of the 38th rifle division on the northwestern outskirts of Ternovaya. As a result of a surprise attack, the 2nd battalion, having suffered heavy losses, left those captured with such difficulty on the outskirts of the house and retreated to a grove adjoining the village from the southwest.

Subsequently, it became known that in this battle the gunners of the anti-tank battery, who supported the 2nd battalion, covered themselves with glory. Repulsing the attacks of the Nazis, the batteries destroyed eight tanks and gave the remnants of the battalion the opportunity to retreat to a new line, while they themselves, one and all, died. The division commander reported that enemy aircraft had dropped an airborne assault on Ternovaya — about 25 paratroopers, as well as ammunition, food, fuel”...

May 17th. An attempt by the Germans to escape from Ternovaya. By May 17, the front of Ryabyshev's army was similar to the reverse letter "G". The vertical component, from south to north, was occupied by: the remnants of the 13th Guards. SD, 162nd SD, 38th SD, 32nd Cavalry Division. Horizontal, from east to west: a regiment of the 175th Rifle Division, the 169th Rifle Division and two regiments of the 175th Rifle Division. The corner of these components of the front of the 28th Army was covered by the 5th Guards Cavalry Division. According to Glantz's album, Ryabyshev's tanks (6th Guards Tank Brigade, 57th Tank Brigade and 84th Tank Brigade) were in the center of the vertical component. According to Soviet maps, the 6th Guards Cavalry Division was also located here. In other words, the strongest units of the 28th Army were concentrated not in the direction where the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions were striking - along the horizontal component, behind which was the flank of Gordov's 21st Army, but along old front line.

“The Soviets attacked Hill 200.9 from early morning,” they write.

! Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 205.

162

Konstantin Bykov

about the day of May 17 historians of the 3rd Panzer Division. - To repel this blow! I had to abandon parts of the 128th rifle regiment (5.K.128), the 652nd corps engineer battalion (Kogrz-R1. - V1.652) and the 9th company of the 201st tank regiment (9.R.V. 201). The surrounded 2nd Battalion of the 201st Tank Regiment (P./R.K.201) tried to break out of Ternovaya to the southwest. However, the battalion had to lie down in the very first acceleration, after the loss of 13 tanks.

Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott did not yet know anything about this when, on May 17 at 07.00, with his battle group, he struck from Vesely to the Murom valley. Enemy resistance turned out to be insignificant here, and Neskuchnoye was already taken at about 10.00. 752 captives fell into our hands?. To the west of the settlement there was still enemy artillery, which now had to be destroyed. In the process, the battle group used up its forces and could not advance further. In the afternoon, the command to withdraw was received, as a strong enemy tank attack began against the 23rd Panzer Division, and the situation became dangerous. The battle group returned to Veseloe again, where they spent the night. After the arrival of Lieutenant Becker (VeskKeg) with 15 new R-Sh tanks, the battalion was able to regroup once more”?

According to the scheme of that day from Glantz's album, it was the attack of three tank brigades of Ryabyshev from the Bayrak region to the west - to Veseloye. According to the Soviet scheme No. 12 from the 5th edition of the Collection of Military Historical Materials of the Great Patriotic War (M.: Voenizdat, 1951) - the 6th and 57th brigade advanced, the 84th was in reserve, closer to Ternovaya; Simultaneously, from the north, from Kozlov to Neskuchnoye, the 169th Rifle Division was advancing towards the tanks (possibly, together with the divisions of the 3rd KK, which are marked at Glantz). That is, it was an attempt to encircle the entire German tank group located inside the reverse letter “G” that we called. Ryabyshev himself dates our tank offensive on May 18, and on May 17 (according to Ryabyshev) the 162nd Rifle Division could strike in the direction indicated by the Germans in order to free the 244th Rifle Division.

In Neskuchny, if the 169th Rifle Division did not have time to regroup, the 434th Regiment of Lieutenant Colonel I.P. was in the second echelon of the division. Mishina (Kachur V.P., Nikolsky V.V. Decree. Op. P. 55).

3 Sezsyshe 4er 3. Rap2er-Ou\$yup Bel t-Vgapdepbogya 1935 - 1945. - 5. 267.

163

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Interesting data about the Germans' attempt to escape from Ternova, although referring, it is true, this attempt to May 18, is given by Ryabyshev:

"...Returning from the command post of the 244th Rifle Division!, I drove to Hill 226.3, where the command posts of the 38th Rifle Division and the 84th Tank Brigade were located. I really wanted to take measures on the spot to speed up the liquidation of the enemy's stronghold in Ternovaya. This thorn still chained to itself a large number of troops, tied up freedom of maneuver in our rear, in a word, caused a lot of trouble. The enemy attached great importance to holding this point. This was also evidenced by the breakthrough of tanks in the village. The Nazis tried to pin down as many of our forces as possible near Ternovaya and thereby weaken and slow down our offensive. I wanted to visit the battle area myself and make sure that, as I was informed, this "fortress" was impregnable.

Enemy aviation still dominated the air, every day several times, sometimes with only short breaks, bombed the battle formations of our troops blockading Ternovaya. I saw the results of the bombing from a distance: a beautiful dense forest, the pride of the local residents, surrounding Ternovaya from the north, east and south, was a pitiful sight. Burnt, split, uprooted trees were scattered in a chaotic mess.

The commander of the 38th Infantry Division, Colonel Nikolai Petrovich Dotsenko, unfolded the map...

...At this time, the signalman on duty reported that enemy tanks had left Ternovaya to a height of 226.3.

- How many? asked Lieutenant Colonel Dotsenko.

"So far, they report, you can see nine," answered the telephone operator.

How would you like to meet them? - turned to the standing

'
We are talking about the remnants of the 244th division, which were withdrawn from the encirclement with the help of the fresh 162nd rifle division.

164

Konstantin Bykov

next to the commander of the 84th Tank Brigade, Colonel Daniil Nikolaevich Bely.

- We will meet with dignity, Comrade Lieutenant General, I have five tanks here in ambush.

- Awas what is there? I ask Colonel Dotsenko.

- Two anti-tank guns and an armor-piercing squad.

- Good too. Take action! Just let them get closer.

Soon we saw enemy tanks. They marched in a deployed formation of three tanks in a ledge on the right forward. Firing on the move, the tanks broke through the battle formation of the battalion of the 728th Infantry Regiment and, probably, hoped to crush our command post, walk around the rear, visit

panic. But the soldiers were calm. Our weapons were silent. The gunner-rangefinder reported the distance every hundred meters:

— 600 meters... 500... 400... 300 meters...

- Fire! the commander of the 84th tank brigade commanded over the radio. Our tanks, hidden in ambush, and anti-tank guns fired a volley, another... Five tanks with black crosses began to smoke and stopped. But what is it?.. The other four tanks also stopped. A little later, hatches opened, and tank commanders appeared from them with their hands up!

"Here they are, the conquerors: as soon as they were given a good blow on the nose, they immediately raised their hands," I thought with anger and satisfaction.

May 13 - 17. Fighting north-northeast of Kharkov. Assessment of the general situation at the front. Everything that was said above concerned the situation on the southern wing of our northern strike force, which was hit by German tank divisions from the south and southwest. However, the shock group

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 211 - 212.

165

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

rovka, with the exception of the 38th Army, which was crushed on May 13 and the 13th Guards, which was stopped. sd of the 28th army, continued to successfully advance to the west. Who opposed our troops (169th and 175th rifle divisions) north-northeast of Kharkov?

"The units of the 3rd Panzer Division, assigned to defend Kharkov, during all these days also did not have any calmness," the history of the 3rd Panzer Division answers our question. — After the 394th Rifle Regiment of Oberst-Lieutenant Zimmerman (5.V.394, Hiptegtapp) already occupied its rear line on May 13, on May 16 it was subordinated to the 294th Infantry Division (294.I.O.). The Tzimmerman battle group now consisted of the 394th Rifle Regiment (5.K.394), the 1st Battery of the 12th Air Defense Regiment (1./Nak-V 21.12) and the 5th Battery of the 294th Artillery Regiment (5./A.K..294). The 1st battalion of the 394th rifle regiment (1./5.B.394) remained as a decisive reserve of the 18th army corps (KHUPD.AK)! in Bolshie Prohody, while the 2nd Battalion of the 394th Rifle Regiment (P./5.K.394) took up defensive positions in Malye Prohody. The next day, the battle group goes to Liptsy to protect the road to Kharkov here. The 1st battalion of the 394th Rifle Regiment of Hauptmann Baron von Heyden-Rinsch (1./5.K.394, Egypt. u. 4. Neudep-KupzspP) occupies a height of 193.3 in the evening of the same day, which a few hours ago was stormed by the 222nd Infantry Regiment (1.ŷ.222)3. Except for artillery shelling, the combat group has not yet had any contact with the enemy."

' This is most likely a mistake. We should be talking about the 17th Corps, which was located north of Kharkov and which included the 294th Infantry DIVISION.

2 Great (on some maps - Big) and Small Passages are located north of Kharkov. To the east of the Prokhods are Liptsy, Veseloe and Ternovaya, from where the Soviet northern attack group advanced. Important routes for the Germans from Belgorod to Kharkov passed through this area.

The 322nd regiment belonged to the 75th infantry division, which was located in the Belgorod region.

1 Sezsshsshe 4er 3. Rap2er-P/u1yup Velt-Vgap4depbige 1935 - 1945. - 5. 267.

166

Konstantin Bykov

In the same section, the historians of the 3rd TD also report the beginning of the offensive of the southern German grouping: "Heavy defensive battles east of Kharkov made it impossible for the German 6th Army to start the operation planned in the south to cut off Soviet formations west of Donetsk, near Izyum. Based on this situation, the army group was ordered to advance only with the forces of the 1st Panzer Army (1.P7. - Appee) Colonel General von Kleist and parts of the 17th Army. On May 17, 1942, the 1st Panzer Army launched an offensive that would later go down in history as the "Spring Battle around Kharkov". The southern group (44th and 52nd army corps) returns Izyum already 2 days after the start of the enterprise, while the 3rd tank corps of the cavalry general von Mackensen (Sh.R.K., Sepega 4. Kau, u. MacKenzenp) takes heights to the north of Barvenkovo. The tank forces are turning west to support the advance of the 11th Army and the 6th Romanian Corps. On May 21, the heads of the 14th and 16th Panzer Divisions reached the area of Britaya (Vga{a!-Abspiio`.

May 18 Continuation of the offensive of the northern group of Soviet troops. On the morning of May 18, the 28th and 38th armies were to resume the offensive. Moskalenko's order for this dated it either "on the night of May 18", or "on the night of the 19th". Ryabyshev, talking about the events, begins to confuse the dates from May 17th. It is obvious that the reason for such confusion is that: "The setting of tasks for the troops operating in the northern sector of the offensive, starting from May 18 until the termination of the operation, was carried out by issuing private orders to the commanders of the armies (usually orally by direct wire) by the commander of the South-West-

| Sezsyshe 4er 3. Rapkheg-Ru\chup Bet-Vgapadepigya 1935-1945.-5. 268. Obviously, there is some kind of confusion here. The heads of the 14th and 16th TDs met on May 18 in the area of the Bereka River. After that, the 14th etc. continued its advance to the north, and the 16th was thrown to the west towards the Britai River. By May 21, the 16th TD returned to the area of operation of the 14th TD.

167

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the front or its chief of staff, - says "Front illustration", talking about the tasks of the northern armies. "At the direction of the front commander, these armies were to resume the offensive on the morning of May 18th. The 28th Army was to defeat the German group operating in the area of Veseleye, Arapovka, Ploskoye, Ternovaya with a concentric strike by the 169th and 162nd divisions.

The main role at this stage of the operation was to be played by the 162nd Rifle Division in cooperation with a group of tanks. The defeat of the German grouping was supposed to be completed by bringing into battle in the zone of the 162nd division units of the 277th rifle division and the 58th tank brigade. The 38th Rifle Division, reinforced by a regiment of the 32nd Cavalry Division, received the task of defeating the German garrison in Ternovaya and capturing this point.

Simultaneously with the 28th Army, the 38th Army was to go on the offensive with its right flank with the task of capturing the settlements of Nepokrytoe and Peschanoe. To accomplish this task, the 266th and 124th divisions were reinforced by two tank brigades (13th and 36th), which were replenished with materiel and had a total of 71 tanks. The material part of the tank brigades was received during the day of the 17th and the night of the 18th of May, but the crews, especially at the platoon level, were not knocked together "".

What happened next is told by the history of the 3rd Panzer Division:

"On May 18, the planned counterattack of Bright's corps group on Hill 226 was canceled, as the enemy, having strengthened at night, again attacked the positions of the 23rd Panzer and 71st Infantry Divisions with massed forces. Particularly fierce fighting unfolded around Hill 200.9, where the 23rd Panzer Division suffered heavy losses. Then an enemy tank strike — with the participation of 50 to 60 combat vehicles — followed against the positions of the 71st Infantry Division of Major General

Kolomietsi Maxim, Galushko Andrey. Front illustration. Battles for Kharkov in May 1942. - 2000. - No. 6.

168

Konstantin Bykov

von Hartmann (W. Nyttapp) at the Uncovered. Fortunately, thanks to the decisive use of the Stuk group from the 77th squadron (ZKa-Starre 77), this attack was repulsed before the enemy reached the German positions.

The battle group of Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott was reinforced with four 8.8 cm anti-aircraft guns and temporarily became a corps reserve in Veseloe. However, due to the fact that by noon the situation worsened, the group was subordinated to the 71st Infantry Division. The head of the operations department ([a] of this division, Oberst Lieutenant of the General Staff Schütz (Zsvo{) personally instructed the battle group. The march to the area of the new battle turned out to be very difficult, as the day was very hot. The columns were shrouded in dense clouds of sand and dust. This "littered up" not only weapons and property, but also all the pores of the human body.

The protection of the Vesely area is taken over by the battle group of Oberst von Aulek (near AshoskK) - the 1st battalion of the 226th infantry regiment, the 2nd battalion of the 3rd rifle regiment, one battery of the 75th artillery regiment, one tank company and one company of the 3rd motorcycle rifle battalion (G.K. 226, P./5.K. 3, yeshe VaTsepe A.V. 75, 1 Raphegkotrash ip4 1 Kotrape K. 3). The group of Oberst Lieutenant Zimmermann, located to the north, was repeatedly attacked by Russian rifle units in the second half of this hot day. The most dangerous blows: which were successfully repelled, were inflicted on the positions of the 222nd Infantry Regiment of Major Pintshofez (Major Rap (svouya \$) and the 1st Battalion of the 394th Infantry Regiment of Hauptmann von dem Heyden-Rinsch (at 4. Neudep-KupzsV).

During the ongoing battle in these days, during which units moved from one side to the other, Bright's corps group achieved the following successes: 142 tanks, 77 guns, 50 anti-tank guns and 31 mortars were destroyed, 3820 people were taken prisoner. All this happened with a constant change in the points of application of forces by the enemy and, unfortunately, accompanied

169

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

was given by really unsuccessful orders that were not coordinated with each other "".

On this day, May 18, Commander-28 sent all his reserves into battle:

"So, the enemy's tank counterattack violated the plan of our offensive operation, delayed the entry into battle of the task force. That is why it was decided on the morning of May 18 that the 13th Guards, 162nd and 169th Rifle Divisions attack in a western direction? and restore the positions lost the day before; to eliminate enemy tanks that had broken through into our rear and prevented our infantry from conducting active combat operations, create a tank group consisting of the 6th Guards, 57th and 84th Tank Brigades under the command of the brigade commander of the 6th Guards.

On May 18, at 7:30 a.m., a tank group from the starting line at a height of 226.3 began a battle for the village of Veseloye. When the tank group approached the Lopan River, three kilometers west of Hill 226.3, it was counterattacked by a large group of German tanks from Hill 218.6. A fight ensued that lasted about an hour. Having lost 13 tanks, the Nazis began to withdraw in a westerly direction.

Pursuing the retreating enemy, the tank group at Hill 200.9 was again counterattacked by several dozen tanks supported by dive bombers. A counter tank battle ensued, which lasted until dark. Having lost 21 combat vehicles,

The Germans withdrew to the village of Veseloye. The falling night prevented our tankers from pursuing the enemy. During the day, the group burned 34 enemy armored units ...

...However, on this day, not everything went as we planned. At about 8 a.m., 80 tanks and an infantry regiment with motorcyclists attacked the village of Neskuchnoye after several attacks by dive bombers (combat group

| Sezsyshe 4er 3. Rap2er-Rgup Ve]t-Vgapdepbige 1935 - 1945. -

5. 268. 2 Obviously, there is an inaccuracy here: the 169th was advancing to the south.

170

Konstantin Bykov

Schmidt-Ott. - Auth.), which was defended by the 434th rifle regiment of the 169th rifle division, and height 208.7, held by units of the 244th rifle division. The first attack was repulsed, while the attackers suffered heavy losses in manpower and equipment. But the enemy delivered another, massive bombing strike on the battle formations of the units, as a result of which the positions of the defenders were literally plowed up, many people and firepower went out of order. The survivors could not stand it and withdrew to the rear defensive line created earlier near the villages of Arapovka and Ploskoye... The 3rd Guards Cavalry Corps part of the forces took an active part in repelling enemy counterattacks. His 5th Guards Cavalry Division Colonel N.S. Chepurkina repulsed the attack of a large number of tanks with infantry near the villages of Arapovka and Ploskoe. The 34th motorized rifle brigade of Colonel K.I. Ovcharenko, operating with the 5th Guards Cavalry Division, captured these settlements...

The 6th Guards Cavalry Division of Colonel A. I. Belogorsky, occupying its initial position at heights 218.3 and 226.3, repelled an attempt by 50 tanks to break into Ternovaya. Having lost 14 tanks, the Germans rolled back to the village of Veseloye. 32nd Cavalry Division Colonel A. TsP. Moskalenko assisted the 38th Infantry in the battle for the village of Ternovaya with one regiment.

The enemy continued to hold the initiative during May 18-20 (the enemy himself was by no means so optimistic about these days, which we will see later. - Auth.), although our tank group continued to attack. The enemy stubbornly resisted it, went over to counterattacks with large forces of tanks and infantry. Our tankers confidently entered into combat with superior forces and came out victorious. Several times they broke through the enemy defenses near the village of Veseloye, broke into it and fought there, but the infantry of the 162nd and 169th rifle divisions, pinned to the ground by enemy aircraft and artillery, could not consolidate the success of the group.

171

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

At the end of each day, she had to return to her original position.

Every day the actions of the enemy aviation became more and more active. The bombardments of our battle formations followed one after another. Dive bombers Yu-87 even hunted behind individual tanks and vehicles"...

May 19 - 22. German breakthrough to Ternovaya, withdrawal of encircled and retreat. The beginning of actions for the redeployment of the 3rd TD to the "southern" front. "On the night of May 19, Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott received two orders at once. First, was he supposed to go to the aid of the 71st Infantry Division? and secondly, at the same time the 23rd Panzer Division, which was just again drawn into heavy defensive battles, tells the story of the 3rd Rapte-P0\1\$10 about the final phase of the tank battle on the "northern" front. P. - On this sunny summer day, Major General Bright, together with the headquarters of the division, was called to Kharkov to take over

command on the southern front of the army °. The 6th Army also intended to go on the offensive in order to unite with the 1st Panzer Army, which had been advancing north for two days. Command over all units of the 3rd Panzer Division assigned to the 23rd Panzer Division was taken over by Oberst Westhofen, who was also subordinate to the 23rd Panzer Division. Oberst Westhofen led battle groups to Vesele, from where a strong offensive was to be launched on Ternovaya on May 20 in order to finally free the troops surrounded there. To carry out this enterprise, Oberst Westhofen commanded not only the battle group Schmidt-Ott and

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 213 - 214.

2 The units of this division were attacked by the 13th Guards Rifle Division Rodimtsev, units of the 162nd Rifle Division Colonel Matveev and units of the 34th Motorized Rifle Brigade Colonel Ovcharenko.

3 This refers to the northern side of the Barvenkovsky ledge, which, in relation to the current position of the 3rd TD, was in the south.

172

Konstantin Bykov

2nd Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, but also the units of the 23rd Panzer Division assigned to this (K. 23 and P. / A.K. 128).

May 20 was again hot sunny weather. The battalions took up their starting position at Vesele and on Murom. However, before the German artillery fire attack was launched, the Russian tanks rolled onto Veseloe. Opposing the Soviets was the 3rd Battalion of the 6th Tank Regiment (Sh./R.K.6), Major Ziervogel, who managed to knock out six T-34s. After that, the Stuka roared over the heads of the shooters and tankers and attacked the Russian positions. Using this situation, our groups launched an attack at 10.55. Since the Soviets could not withstand the power of the tank offensive and the Shtuk attack, our troops quickly won the territory and, without stopping, struck from the south of Neskuchny directly to the east. The Schmidt-Ott battle group attacked Hill 208.7 and stopped for a short time to replenish their ammunition. While the arrows [5.K.3 of Major Velman (UeShtapp) followed the tanks, P./5.K.3 of Major Boem (Voe bt) entered Neskuchnoye at noon and occupied this settlement. The battle around the village, in which the adjutant of the 1-th battalion of the 3rd rifle regiment (1.5.K..3), Lieutenant Jobst (\$7060), distinguished himself, continued for several more hours before the Russians finally surrendered. In the afternoon, the battle group of Oberst Lieutenant Zimmerman, coming from the left, entered the area. On this day, the battle group lost several officers wounded. Including Hauptmann von Heider-Rinsch, Lieutenant Dyurgolts (Oigo]2), Senior Lieutenant of the Medical Service! Dr. Efers (Eyer \$) and Lieutenant Bolenhagen (Wo! Enpagen) - only from the 1st Battalion of the 394th Rifle Regiment (1.5.8.394), commanded by Lieutenant Ditmer (Oiiteg).

The battle group Schmidt-Ott, attacking in the center, struck further east in the afternoon and by the evening of ovla

GV original - OBegag /. According to Taube's dictionary, this is a senior lieutenant of the medical service; military doctor with the rank of lieutenant; junior doctor of the regiment.

173

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

cases with a height of 219.7 in front of Ternova herself. Unfortunately, the encircled group of Oberst Grüner failed to be released on the same day. The enemy continuously fired heavy artillery fire on our columns, and at night the battle group withdrew again. Rifle battalions entrenched themselves on Murom. By evening, the Zimmerman battle group was in the region of height 204.3. The 3rd battalion of the 183rd infantry regiment (Sh./1.V.183) was also advanced here as reinforcement.

The Soviets stubbornly defended themselves. Any movement of the German formations was subjected to heavy fire raids from their artillery. The commander of S./R.V.6, Major Ziervogel, was seriously wounded. After a short time, this brave officer died at the divisional medical center.

Oberst Westhofen took over the battle groups of Oberst Lieutenant Zimmermann and Oberst Witkopf (UMI-Kor. After the air raid, at 09.30 (May 21. - Auth.), our units began the attack again. It seems that the Russians finally conceded. They left the positions so stubbornly defended until now and withdrew to the northwest. The 6th Panzer Regiment delivers a new blow with a sharp wedge at Hill 219.7 and from here, in a single echelon, along Ternovaya. Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott, who was with the lead group, received the Knight's Cross for this raid in October 1942. Oberst Lieut. 1st Panzer Regiment, and now the 201st Panzer Regiment, were the first to be able to greet their old comrades in arms.

Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott puts up one tank company for defense from the north and south. A convoy of 40 trucks was led through this lock to Ternova, which took 350 wounded from the combat groups of Oberst Grüner and Oberst Soltmen. The surrounded were literally at the limit of their strength and were starving, their daily diet consisted of 125 biscuits and 200 canned vegetables.

Rifle battalions located in the Murom valley continued to ensure the safety of this enterprise.

174

Konstantin Bykov

At the same time, the Zimerman battle group advanced to the northeast, after the 222nd Infantry Regiment took Kozlov (Ko\$1o\,). During the day, the enemy in this area also rolled up his defenses and retreated. Now German warplanes were constantly in the air and unambiguously controlled the airspace. At the time when the Red Army's breakthrough to Kharkov from the east failed, the 6th and 57th Soviet armies were stopped south of Kharkov. At the same time, the Russian offensive in the southern part of the Eastern Front was over. Now the hour has come for the German armies of Field Marshal von Bock's Army Group!

The evacuation of the wounded from Oberst Grüner's battle group was completed on the night of May 22. The German units, under the protection of the 6th Panzer Regiment, took up positions to the west of Ternovaya. Already by noon the order came to separate the Schmidt-Ott battle group from them. He was given a part of the 22nd Infantry Regiment (294. [1.0.] of Oberst von Aulek (n. Ats] osK). The rest of the 3rd Panzer Division remains under the command of Oberst Westhofen. During the day, the still scattered companies of 5.K. 394 were pulled closer to Vesely, where they replaced units of the 23rd Panzer Division. The regiment took up defensive positions from the eastern edge of Veseloe to the northern part of Peremoga.

The picture of the last battles in the Ternovaya area is supplemented by the commander of the troops of the 28th Army D.I. Ryabyshev: "On May 21, the VPU received reports that the enemy inflicted a strong blow by infantry, tanks and aircraft on the battle formations of the 169th and 175th rifle divisions from the direction of Veselo, from the south, and from the direction of Lipty, from the west. . They could not withstand the massive attacks and were forced to retreat. I ordered the commanders of the 5th Guards, 32nd Cavalry Divisions, and the 57th Tank Brigade to take over the attacking enemy. Timely support of neighbors helped units of the 169th and 175th rifle divisions to plan

| Sezsyshe 4er 3. Rap2er-Puuchup Wet-Vtapdepige 1935 - 1945. - \$. 268 - 270.

175

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

move away steadily and gain a foothold on the eastern bank of the Murom River.

The 162nd and 13th Guards Rifle Divisions also fought off fierce enemy attacks.

The night of May 22 was alarming. A report was received that the 3rd battalion of the 48th rifle regiment, which occupied the northern part of Ternovaya, was attacked by two groups of the enemy. The first group (about 200 infantrymen with four tanks) attacked from the center of the village of Ternovaya, and the second (about 150 infantrymen with six tanks) attacked from the side of height 206.7, from the northwest. Under continuous shelling, from the front and rear, the battalion retreated to the edge of the forest north of Ternovaya and, after restoring order in the subunits, having replenished ammunition, at dawn again switched to active operations.

In half an hour a new report. The Nazis attacked the 2nd Battalion of the 48th Rifle Regiment, now entrenched on the eastern outskirts of Ternovaya, by force up to a battalion, but did not achieve success, lost a dozen or three soldiers and retreated to the center of the village under the cover of firing points.

In the morning I went to the command post of the 38th Infantry Division. Parts of Colonel N. TsP. Dotsenko finally broke through the enemy defenses and broke into the central part of the village. The fight was both intense and fierce. By 10 o'clock on May 22, Ternovaya was finally cleared of the invaders and thus eliminated the enemy's thorn in the rear of the army. It was possible to surround and capture only the remnants of the garrison, and, as it turned out, it amounted to at least one and a half battalions. Most of the survivors under the cover of tanks escaped from the ring. Colonel Dotsenko reported that the Nazis had left up to 1,000 corpses in the village. They were stacked in long stacks like firewood. Apparently, the fascists had such a hard time here that there was not even time for burial...

... Over the next two days, on May 22 and 23, the army formations continued to conduct stubborn holding battles. The strength of the enemy's blows increased. For a happy ending

176

Konstantin Bykov

there was no hope left for the offensive we had begun... Until May 24, formations of the 28th Army defended themselves on the lines I mentioned, then, by order of the commander of the Southwestern Front, they withdrew to the rear defensive line. This maneuver was preceded by sad events for us that unfolded on the southern wing of the Southwestern Front.

3rd Panzer Division in battles against the southern shock group of Soviet troops. May 21 - 30, 1942. In the process of turning these sad events into tragic ones, the 23rd and 3rd Panzer Divisions took part, which were never able to be tied up in battle in the north by the formations of Ryabyshev and Moskalenko... |

"The battle group of Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott, recalled to Kharkov, used the next day for refreshment," the chroniclers of the 3rd TD continue their story. — Combat detachment (KatraMelip?)? Major Frank (EgapK) takes over the 6th Panzer Regiment, while Oberst Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott is in charge of all other units. Unfortunately, nothing happened with the expected rest. According to a preliminary order, the march to the south began already at noon.

Since May 21, Major General Bright with his staff was on the southern front of the 6th Army?. General Paulus instructed him to form a corps group (Kogrsegarre), which was to consist of the 44th Infantry Division, the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions. This group was supposed to defend the front of the army, facing east, and at the same time advance to the south. In addition, the corps group will be subordinate to the 8th Muarmey Corps of General of Artillery Heitz (UP.A.K.,

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 215 - 217.

2 KatraMeljpre, according to Taube's dictionary, is a combat unit; Capré-BaiaShop - Battalion of the 1st echelon.

3 This refers to the section between Andreevka and Balakleya along the Seversky Donets, which was the northern flank for our southern strike force.

177

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Sep. 4. A. Nei?). However, the next day the general situation changed, as the head of the 3rd Panzer Corps of General of the Cavalry von Mackensen (SH.R.K., Sep. 9. Cau. u. Mackensen) approached Balakleya. This was done by the 14th Saxon Panzer Division under the command of Major General Kühn (KaVp), who in 1940 commanded the 3rd Panzer Brigade (3.R7.—Vprade) and was awarded the Knight's Cross. On the afternoon of May 22, he took Bayrak! and reached the southern bank of the Donets in the place where the 44th Infantry Division was located on its northern bank. Thus, the ring around both Soviet armies south of Kharkov was closed.

Bright's Corps Group intervenes directly from the position of concentration in this battle. Initially, however, only parts of the 44th Infantry Division and the 1st Battalion of the 201st Tank Regiment, Oberst Lieutenant von Heidebreck (near Neudebgesk), were at his disposal. Their own offensive began on May 23 at 02.30 from Balakleya. At first, the enemy put up fierce resistance, but then withdrew to the west, into the cauldron. 1st battalion of the 201st tank regiment by 08.30 established contact with the 14th tank division. Later, having won the area to the south, he met with the lead tanks of the 16th Panzer Division of Lieutenant General Hube (Nife).

The Russians were not yet defeated everywhere, especially since they were skillfully supported by their anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. The losses of the 1st Battalion of the 201st Tank Regiment were heavy, and reinforcements arrived only in the afternoon. The 4th company of the 3rd motorcycle rifle battalion arrived here on armored personnel carriers under the command of Lieutenant Meister (4./K..3, Mezcheg). She was subordinate to Oberst Lieutenant von Heidebreck (near Neudebgesk).

| This Bayrak should not be confused with Bayrak, located near Ternova.

2 Along the Donets, from west to east, from Bishkin to Bayrak, there were the 47th Rifle Division and the 337th Rifle Division. To the east, behind the breakthrough area of the 14th TD, is Sherstyuk's group. Part of the 337th Rifle Division withdrew to the west, into the pocket, the other part managed to break through to the east.

178

Konstantin Bykov

Shortly thereafter, an anti-aircraft battery was also allocated. The battle group went on the offensive again and won considerable territories south of Shebelinka.

On the night of Sunday Trinity, May 24, Oberst Westhofen arrived at the corps group with his headquarters. From 11:00 a.m. on the previous day, his battle group marched through Chuguev, Grakovo, and Mospanovo. Here Oberst Westhofen set up his command post. Not far from them was Lieutenant Schmidt-Ott with his tank companies. For these units of the 3rd Panzer Division, there was no longer an opportunity to take part in offensive encirclement battles. Their task during the following days was the task of preventing enemy attempts to escape, reconnaissance of roads, monitoring the construction of crossings and

delivery of prisoners.

The weather did not match Trinity at all. The sky was cloudy, the wind was cool, repeated short-term rains swept over the Ukrainian land. The night began with the 23rd Panzer Division crossing the Donets near Andreevka. After all the motorized units were on the south bank in the first half of the day, the offensive of the 201st tank regiment began. The tanks, supported by 5.8.128 and 5.23, rushed to the west, crushed the enemy resistance and attacked Shebelinka. The 44th Infantry Division adjoining them on the left joined the offensive and pressed on Glazunovka.

German combat vehicles were also approaching the area from the south. These were the tanks of the 2nd Tank Regiment (RV2)! Oberst Graf von Strachwitz (OtaRun 53{tasV\27), who would later become one of the most famous tank commanders of the war. Parts of the 1st Battalion of the 201st Tank Regiment (Oberst Lieutenant von Heidebreck), located in the area of 200b height 208.5 east of Shebelinka, established contact with parts of the 16th Panzer Division. The battalion advances south of the settlement and takes Kiseli. At the same time

The 2nd Panzer Regiment was part of the 16th Panzer Division.

179

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The 23rd motorcycle rifle battalion turns to the southwest. The 4th company of Oberleutnant Meister's 3rd Motorcycle Rifle Battalion, the head unit of the 3rd Panzer Division, occupies Hill 204.5 west of Shebelinka. Between the 23rd Panzer Division and the right flank of the 44th Rifle Division, units of the Schmidt-Ott battle group are advancing. She was ordered: to become a front to the east! between both divisions and cover the junction between them. During this, the group met with the 16th engineer battalion (P1.-VI.16)?, and thus the boiler was closed in this area as well.

The enemy does not remain inactive, with all his forces he attacks from west to east, attacking the extended flank of the 16th Panzer Division. The 128th Rifle Regiment (5.8.128) turns south to fall on the Russian flank. This strike quickly reaches the target. By evening, the corps group has a total of 5,000 prisoners.

The offensive to the south on Trinity Monday (May 25. - Auth.) was soon stopped by enemy tanks. Again and again the Soviets tried to break through from west to east. It was only in the afternoon that the 23rd Panzer Division, now reinforced with its own combat vehicles, proceeded with a further attack, which was successfully carried out after the capture of the heights east of Mikhailovka. The 16th Panzer Division had fortified its front and was now able to advance even with two battle groups to the west, to Krutoyarka.

Since the Soviets are repeating their attempts to break through, here, across the Donets, the battle group of Oberst Westhoven is being pulled up. It must clear the territory won by the 23rd Panzer Division from enemy units that had strayed from their main forces and support the 3rd Panzer Corps. In that

| From the east, a group of Sherstyuk from the 38th army of Moskalenko tried to unblock the boiler.

2nd Sapper Battalion of the 16th Panzer Division.

3 According to Glantz's album, on May 25, in this part of the cauldron were: 5th Guards. tbr (at the junction of the 23rd and 3rd td), 49th cd, 26th yakdi 7th brig (against the 3rd td), 37th brig (at the junction of the 3rd tdi 16th td) , 38th brigade and 198th brigade (against the 16th brigade).

180

Konstantin Bykov

The 60th infantry motorized and 1st mountain divisions held out under heavy enemy attacks. On May 26 at 03.00, the battle group set out from Andreevka and around 09.00 arrived in the Popovka area (in the original: RopoKa. - Auth.) ... Unexpectedly, in order to orientate in the situation, the commander-in-chief of the army group, Field Marshal von Bock, arrived. In the afternoon, the battle group advanced 60 km to the south and took up positions in the area of Uspensky (OzrepKa)?. Over the next two days, rifle companies took approximately 1,000 prisoners. Oberleutnant Meister's light 4th company of the BTR of the 3rd motorcycle rifle battalion ([e1sche ER\U/-Kotrashe — 4./ K.3) directly subordinated to Bright's battle group received a combat order to investigate the situation in the south of the pocket and establish contact with the Hungarian division located in the area?. In the cauldron, the company repeatedly ran into and overcame enemy resistance. When a regimental column suddenly appeared in front of the company, near Ve|Kop*, it was already thought that they had found the Hungarians, but it turned out that they were Soviets. The company with a wide wedge (Kotrashebgetske!?) with its thirty-two light armored personnel carriers (32 |e. ERU) immediately attacked the marching infantry regiment from the flank and took 600 prisoners. Runners pursued

and for-

| According to Glantz's album, units of the 23rd Panzer Corps attacked these divisions.

2 Most likely, we are talking about the villages of Nopovka and Uspenskoe, which are located a few kilometers west of Shevelevka. 60 km - if this is not a typo, then this is approximately the distance to the named villages from Chuguev. Such a transfer of troops from north to south could be carried out thanks to the transition to the defense of the 28th and 38th armies.

3 The Kharkov encirclement consisted of several boilers. The "big" boiler was located in the Lozovenka area. To the north, in the Bishkin area, closer to Kharkov, there was a "small" boiler. The cited passage of the German text refers to the southern part of the "small" cauldron. It contained the remnants of the Soviet 233rd (or 253rd) and 47th SD, blocked by units of the 62nd Infantry Division, 23rd Division of the 108th Hungarian Light Infantry Division.

We were unable to identify this area on the map.

5 VgeiKeli, according to Taube's dictionary, is a dissected formation at an angle to the back.

181

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

captured a platoon of Chief Sergeant Hess (He5 \$). During this, the platoon ran into Soviet T-34 tanks, which they evaded. This is the combat use of the new formation of the 4th company of the 3rd motorcycle rifle battalion (4./K.3), which consisted of soldiers of the former 1st reconnaissance battalion (A.A.1), who were transferred in K. 3, became a positively decisive day for tank reconnaissance, as it became proof that reconnaissance often becomes forced into battle and that it was right to re-equip a motorcycle rifle company with light armored personnel carriers.

On May 26, Field Marshal von Bock and General Paulus visited the command post of General Bright in Andreevka. General Bright reported that the 23rd Panzer Division approached Mikhailovka that morning and connected with the heads of the Romanian 6th Corps approaching from the west... At noon, the division once again deployed its tank regiment to the east to provide assistance 60th Motorized Infantry Division. In the afternoon, the regiment reaches Bereka, on the southern coast of which Romanian troops were already stationed. The enemy, after continuous processing by our pilots and heavy losses, lays down his arms. The 23rd Panzer Division captured more than 47,000 people on May 25 alone!

At night the situation changed again. The Soviets once again manage to successfully attack from the Bereki area. Only at 04.45 Oberst Soltmen (So{tapp) and R.V. 201 were able to turn around again to the south to hit the Russians. The 1st battalion of the 3rd rifle regiment of Major

Velman (T./5.K.3, UeStapp). Around 09.00 Bereki area was won for the second time. But now it's final.

Only now the Soviets in the Bereki Valley have capitulated. The area was littered with the wreckage of a defeated army. Dead soldiers and horses, broken guns and vehicles lay in the fields and forests. Terrible picture. On this day, the corps group reported such a success: 55,000 prisoners were captured, 410 guns, 99 tanks, 2,100 cars and 2,000 horses were also booty.

182

Konstantin Bykov

At a time when the battle in this area was coming to an end, the battle in the east was still raging. Now the 14th Panzer Division needs help. The combat group of Oberst Westhofen (UMeztouen) is marching towards it. However, when the shooters reach the area of Aseevka, the battle ends. Again, the Russian units were defeated by the Stukas.

These days, the head of the operational department of the headquarters of the 3rd Panzer Division, Oberst Lieutenant of the General Staff Pomtov (a, OBeg & (E. 1. S. Ropyuu) returned from vacation. Lieutenant of the General Staff Franz (Obers (E. 1. S. Egap7). Oberst Challe de Bouillet (SB[e \$ 4e VeaiTsets), commander of 5.K. 394, also returned from his homeland.

The "spring battle around Kharkov" was coming to an end. While on May 28 the battle group of Oberst Westhofen, located at the 14th Panzer Division, is once again engaged in the necessary purge at Orlinoyarsky?, the rest of Breit's corps group gather together. The 44th Infantry Division is already out of subordination to the group at noon. In the evening, an order arrives for the return of the 3rd and 23rd Panzer Divisions to Kharkov. Battlegroup Westhofen from 04.00 29 May started moving north.

The gloomy sky is soon clearing up, and in the shining sunlight, the assigned troops of the 3rd Panzer Division - R.K.6, [/5.B.33, [/A.K. 75, K.Z and 1.R1.39 - leave Andreevka and slowly roll north by rail. A trip along a single-track track was not, however, a pleasure, the transport stopped several times. The soldiers felt like winners. (This was the last big encirclement battle that the German army won!)

6th, 9th, and 57th Soviet armies no longer exist! The following major Russian formations were destroyed: 14th Guards Rifle Division, 41, 47, 99, 103, 106, 160, 210, 248, 253, 260, 270, 317, 333, 335, 337, 341, 351, 393 and 411th

The 14th Panzer Division, defending with its front to the east, in the area of Chepel, repulsed the attacks of the 38th armies to meet the encircled.

20 Rlinoyarsk - villages 5 - bkm north-east of Lozovenka.

183

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

rifle divisions, two motorized brigades, 26th, 28th, 34th, 38th, 49th, 60th, 62nd, 64th and 70th cavalry divisions, 5th Guards Tank Brigade, 6th, 7th, 15th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 48th, 64th, 67th, 121st, 131st, 198th and 199th tank brigades. The commanders-in-chief of the 6th and 57th armies (lieutenant general Gorodnyansky and lieutenant general Podlas) were killed.

An OKW report dated 30 May 1942 stated:

"... The number of prisoners increased to 240,000. The bloody losses of the enemy are great. The number of military equipment captured or destroyed in battles is 1249 tanks, 2026 guns, 538 aircraft and countless

what weapons and property ... "!

3rd Panzer Division in the battles against the northern grouping of Soviet troops May 23 - June 3, 1942. However, with the departure of part of the 3rd Panzer Division to the south, the fighting in the north, in which the units of the 3rd Panzer Division that remained here, took part, continued.

"While the battle was going on south of Kharkov with the three advancing Soviet armies of Marshal Timoshenko, some units of the 3rd Panzer Division were still in the Veseleye area and were fighting the Red Army," Sezsische 4er tells about this stage of the hostilities. 3. Rap7er-P/\1\$10p. — Both battalions of the 394th Rifle Regiment over the past 8 days, together with their subordinate units in the sector of the 294th Infantry Division of Oberst Blok (Wax), have participated in more or less heavy battles. The Soviets once again tried to break through the German front with their riflemen and tanks.

On May 23, during the battle east of Hill 200.9, the commander of the 2nd battalion of the 394th rifle regiment, Major Peshke (P./\$.V.394, RessVKe) was wounded twice in less than an hour. The battalion was received by Lieutenant Maske (MazKe). Lieutenant Arndt (AGpd ()) was also wounded, but continued to lead

| Sezsisme er 3. Rapkheg-O1mu15yup Veit-Vtapdepbitr 1935 - 1945. - 5. 270 - 274.

184

Konstantin Bykov

the 5th company of the 394th rifle regiment (5./5.V.394), which was in the epicenter of the battle.

The next day, enemy pressure intensified. At the same time, the Russians managed to penetrate between both battalions and reach Vesely. Close combat began everywhere. Few anti-tank guns were not able to disable Russian combat vehicles. Fortunately, the 2nd Battery of the 19th Air Defense Regiment (2./EakK-K2.19) was stationed here, which knocked out six T-34s with its four 8.8 cm anti-aircraft guns. Nevertheless, all companies were forced to withdraw to the western slope of Hill 200.9. The wounded commanders of the 6th and 7th companies, Lieutenant Hartwig (Na[\12) and Lieutenant Maske, were replaced respectively by Lieutenant Gress (Oges\$) and Lieutenant von Wedel (\Uleed]), who continued the battle.

Major Haspel (Nazre) arrived in the afternoon. He accepted and with habitual energy began to lead the battalion, which in the last battles lost 11 people killed and 47 wounded.

For the next two days the Russians did not take any offensive action. Their own search group found that the enemy was digging in in front of the front. But on May 27 [./5.K. 394 discovered the retreat of the enemy. The sentinel group advanced forward found that the enemy had left the nearby rifle trenches. On the morning of May 28, P. / Kommersant V. 394, which had not previously noticed the reverse movements of the Russians, sent two combat-ready strike groups - the 5th and 6th companies of the 394th rifle regiment - to the height of 200.9 and to the east of it. The shock group of the 5th company under the leadership of the reliable non-commissioned officer Shtrucken (UgasKep) broke into the forest northeast of the height, threw hand grenades at the enemy trenches in close combat and captured one officer and 35 privates. It was the rearguard of an enemy regiment that had withdrawn unnoticed.

After the return of both shock groups, the battalion advanced combat outposts - with the strength of two squads (Ogiarrep) - on both sides of the road to Ternovaya. In the second polo

185

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

In the midst of the day, a reinforced platoon of the 7th company of the 394th rifle regiment under the command of sergeant major Letzas ([e{27a\$), on the orders of the regiment, was advanced as a combat guard 3 km to the east to the height of 207.2 in front of the front. The platoon was able to settle down here without contact with the enemy. On May 29, the combat outposts of the battalion established communication with each other, as well as with the left and right neighbors. For reinforcement, the 4th company of the 294th engineer battalion (4. / P1.294) was sent here. Thorough cleaning around the hard-won height of 200.9 added to our trophies 9 machine guns, 2 mortars, 6 anti-tank rifles, 137 rifles, 400 hand grenades, 150 Molotov cocktails, 30,000 cartridges for small arms and about 100 dead. The 394th Rifle Regiment somewhat improved its positions after the further withdrawal of the Russian 632nd Rifle Regiment (Zspo (en-V o. 632)'. The 1st company, on the orders of Hauptmann Rol (Ko!) Was allocated to the reserve. 30 May 6./5.K. June, they again began to advance to the height of 207.2 and were able to surround it from three sides.

After that, the 6th company of the 394th rifle regiment of Lieutenant Gress (Crez\$) was pulled forward. However, when the enemy attacked the height again the next day, the regiment ordered its surrender. The shooters could not leave the height during the day and lay on it all day, tormented by the summer heat.

The company withdrew on the night of June 3, and the enemy immediately occupied the high ground. Platoons of infantry guns (1 @-Giare) Geiger (Ceser), Pieters (Pscheers) and Mintzlaf (Mshai) fired on the Russian positions throughout the hot summer day.

However, the situation has not changed. On June 3, Major Baron von Tokheim (Mauog EgPg. u. GogsKvet), commander of the 543rd anti-tank battalion (P7.72.ASCH.543), arrived at the command post of the 394th Rifle Regiment, and

'
The 632nd joint venture was part of the 175th rifle division of Major General A.D. Kuleshova.

186

Konstantin Bykov

reported that the regiment was to leave its positions on the night of June 5 and redeploy to Kharkov, where the entire 3rd Panzer Division was gathering.

The major took over the leadership of the 394th Infantry Regiment. And Oberst Lieutenant Tsimerman went to Kharkov, where, meanwhile, he had already arrived from the southern front [./K.K. 3.

While preparing for the shift, the 294th Infantry Division ordered the regiment to conduct another operation, which was supposed to cover up these movements. Over the objection of Major Baron von Tockheim, the division insisted on it.

Strike group! The 1st company of the 394th rifle regiment (1./5.V.394) under the leadership of Lieutenant Meller (Moleg) at about 21.30, after a short but strong fire raid by Sh./A.V. 75 (Hauptmann Kersten) and a company of infantry guns under the leadership of Lieutenant Peters (commander of the 9th company of the 394th rifle regiment), went forward. The Russians retreated, but they failed to capture any of them (the target of the shock group).

Therefore, Lieutenant Meller made an independent decision and ordered to move to a height of 207.2. The enemy stationed here was taken by surprise, but put up vigorous resistance. They managed to take one prisoner, however, the shock group lost two people killed and two wounded.

Meanwhile, units of the 513th Infantry Regiment approached? Oberst Pilling (1.K.513, Rlip\$) ik 22.30 relieved the 2nd battalion of the 394th rifle regiment (P./5.K.394). 31 non-commissioned officers and privates were killed in the area of Vesele, > officers and 83 soldiers of the battalion were injured. 1st Battalion

The 394th Infantry Regiment, which was awaiting the return of the search group, left the trenches only around midnight. However, I had to leave the telephone department of J.V. 394, since

\$1055 7irr\$, according to Taube - strike group, according to Ver-P1s

(lap PROMT, - search group. 2 513th regiment of the 294th infantry division.

187

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

ku [K. 513 did not have one. At about 01:00, Major Baron von Tokheim informed General Bright by telephone about the completed shift. Oberst Blok (leader of the 294th Infantry Division) signed the order in part, which says:

“... I express my gratitude and my recognition to this brave regiment, and at the same time I bow my sword in honor of the victims they have suffered. May true soldier's happiness continue to accompany this regiment.

3rd Panzer Division after the battle. June 5 - June 8, 1942. “By June 5, 1942, the 3rd Panzer Division was fully assembled in Kharkov,” the historians of the 3rd Panzer Division finish their story. — The subdivisions occupied their old quarters... After the officers and rank and file had washed off the dirt of the last battle, it was reported that combat, rifle and other training had resumed. A regrouping has been made. Arrived replenishment - only P.O.V. 394 received 15 non-commissioned officers and 92 privates - distributed among companies. The situation with vehicles is gradually improving – on June 9, the first new vehicles arrived from Prague. Major Feldhus's rear supply companies (Prál) brought in about 600 motor vehicles of various types from Prague for the 3rd Panzer Division within a month. The tanks received a new camouflage coloration: green-brown-gray. The internal schedule was drawn up in such a way that by June 15 the division would be ready for use again.

Needless to say, along with all this, there was time for small respite. A visit to the cinema, theater and variety show took place according to the program. Cafes and soldiers' clubs were opened. Art cons were on the agenda.

GV original - Eirgeg.

2 Sezsusme 4er 3. Rapner-P/u151yup Vegln-Vgapaneboge 1935 - 1945. - 5. 274 - 275.

188

Konstantin Bykov

courses and exhibitions. The divisional priest conducted divine services and distant marriages...

On May 30, 1942, four servicemen of the 3rd Panzer Division received the German Cross in Gold: Major Frank (P./R.K.6), Major Peschke (P./5.V.394), Lieutenant Arndt (5. / 5.B.394) and Ober sergeant major Nfeiffer (1./5.B.3). A week later, two more commanders received this order: Major Velman and Hauptmann Baron von dem Heiden-Rinsch.

Major General Bright, immediately after returning from the Southern Front, presented to the headquarters of the 40th Panzer Corps General of the Panzer Troops Stumme (ÿÿÿÿ.ÿ.ÿ., Sepega1 a. R7TG. eishite), to whom the 3rd tank division. Here he received instructions to prepare the division for the planned summer offensive, which would take place in the new grouping. The second meeting took place on 8 June. The commanders of the 3rd and 23rd Panzer and 29th Motorized Infantry Divisions present on it learned that the 40th Panzer Corps, along with the 8th

The army corps will have to strike from the Kharkov-Volchansk region in a northeasterly direction towards Voronezh, uniting with the troops of the 4th Panzer Army. This enterprise was to begin at the signal of "Wilhelm"

| Sezsysme 4er 3. Rapteg-Ou \ 11op Veg! n-Vgapdepbige 1935 - 1945. - \$. 275. The history of the 71st Infantry Division reports that the Wilhelm signal was replaced by the Seidlitz signal.

51st Bomber Squadron "EDELWEISS"

Short story. The 51st bomber squadron "Edelweiss" (KS 51) was formed in May 1939 on the basis of KO 255. Its main weapons were L-88A bombers (until June 1940, the squadron had several He-111N and Ro-17M). Toward the end of the war, the 51st Kampfgeschwader was armed with aircraft

The emblem of the 51st Me-410A and Me-262A and, ultimately, the bomber - having turned into the KS (T) Z1, became a united squadron. nii, fully armed jet

nym Me-262A.

With the beginning of the attack on the USSR, the 5th squadron operated on the southern sector of the front. During the Battle of Kharkov, it was based in Zaporozhye and was part of the 4th Air Corps of the 4th Air Fleet. During this period, the squadron commander was Oberst Paul Kester (Rush Koef\$er).

The situation in the area of use of the 51st squadron near Ternova. On May 12, 1942, the northern and southern strike groups of the Soviet troops went on the offensive. The first disappointment of this offensive was Ternovaya. 28th Army D.I. Ryabysheva, despite the overwhelming superiority in all types of weapons, including aviation, artillery and tanks, could not dislodge the small German garrison that had fortified there from Ternovaya. Neither on the first nor on all subsequent days of the operation... \

"Of the countless number of villages, villages and farms, this settlement was especially memorable to me,"

190

Konstantin Bykov

Bomber of the 51st squadron, who made an emergency landing.

passed then Ryabyshev. — Ternovaya... The people who founded the village did not choose this place by chance. Apparently, in ancient times, our ancestors, fleeing the raids of the Tatar hordes and other nomadic tribes, built it as a reliable fortress. The Nazis also took into account the features of the area. They turned Ternovaya into a stronghold. This village, stretching from north to south for four kilometers and from east to west for three kilometers, with its northern, southern and partly eastern outskirts rested against a dense forest. In front of the western and southwestern outskirts there was a ravine up to 200 meters wide with steep edges. The northwestern, northeastern, and southeastern outskirts were open, high, and from here the approaches to Ternovaya could be seen far around. Before developing the offensive operation, we did not take into account these features, and I did not expect that the village would cause us so much trouble and require great sacrifices "...

The Germans, realizing that Ternovaya diverts a lot of enemy forces and means, immediately organized air support for their forces in this village.

' Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M .: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 189.

191

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Actually, the history of the 51st bomber squadron, from all its participation in the Kharkov battle, tells us precisely and only about this air support ...

51st bomber squadron in the Ternovaya area. Prior to being transferred to the Kharkov direction, the 51st bomber squadron fought in the Crimea and over the Black Sea, and participated in raids on Tuapse. "Major von Bibra (V1ga)? reported after completing a difficult combat mission that surprise raids during the day are simply impossible and will not bring success - from that moment on, its historian Wolfgang Dirich (U/oShNapg G/lepsV) tells us about the 51st squadron. - On May 15, the Kerch Peninsula was recaptured. 150,000 people were taken prisoner. After that, a hard battle for Kharkov began, as a result of which the invasion of the Red Army near Izyum was liquidated. This returned the Donets as a starting point. Geschwader was also ordered to take part in Operation Fridericus in the area east of Kharkov. The Izyum-Kupyansk-Volchansk region was difficult to take, since the troops fought here in close contact with each other. On May 29, 1942, after the completion of this undertaking, the squadron was transferred to the Kharkov-Voychenko direction...

... Tesok near Ternovaya and Varvarovka, where one of these days, in an unclear situation, one German infantry formation was attacked by tanks and surrounded?, became one of the main directions of attack.

'Rensy Yobanya. Katrezsp \ adeg 51 "Go! Me! Z". Yeshe SvgopK atz Rokiteshchep ipa VepsSchep. 1937 - 1945. Moogfisy Wayaz Zalrats, 1991.

2 Bibra (MaJog Er1\$ (Egepeg wop V1ga) - commander of the 3rd group of the 51st squadron.

: Ternovaya was surrounded by the Gruner group (429th regiment of the 168th infantry division) and the Soltmann battle group (from units of the 23rd tank division) that had broken through to it. It seems that the Slovak artillerymen also got into the encirclement.

192

Konstantin Bykov

About PP m I 5

Soviet armored train destroyed near Kupyansk.

Only on May 20, one group made 12 sorties from early morning until sunset, using 46 Yu-88s. On May 21, even 63 Yu-88s participated in 13 sorties! In general, the squadron used 294 Yu-88s for two days.

Two letters from a besieged soldier show how much better you can hold your ground if you know German bombers will help:

"To comrades from the 9th squadron ... Thanks to one of your comrades, a cauldron with smoke and a little greeting from

'
Riemsy ITorrapya. Katrezsv\adeg 51 "Her!e1\$\$. Ete SpgoshK ats \$ Ookiteschep ipd VepsShep. 1937 - 1945. Moyugfisy Uyayo Ziayrats, 1991. - \$. 177. Since in May 1942 the 51st bomber squadron had a hundred aircraft, it is obviously about sorties.

7 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 193

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

you. This gave me reason to write to you and thank you for your courageous and courageous support. How things were with us, you probably already know. The Russians wanted to crush us, but to do this

they failed. Your bombs finally broke him. In part, these bombs fell close to our holes, shaking the ground. You gave us courage, and we are proud of you, because here is a real brotherhood in arms. We marveled at how tireless you were. We are glad that we managed to get out of this diabolical cauldron when our strength was already running out. For 10 days we have received almost no food and now have a little rest to get much-needed rest. Once again, we thank you all for your very important support for us and wish the 9th Squadron success in the future. Break a leg!"

"Dear comrade!

Your bomb in the form of a very pleasant surprise was found by the chief corporal of my platoon. I personally express my personal thanks to you... As you already know, we were blocked for 10 days and were forced to defend ourselves against an enemy that greatly outnumbered us (30,000 people). We were 1000 people, without heavy weapons. The Russians attacked us suddenly and with a huge mass of tanks. In addition, our positions were covered with terrible fire from all types of weapons. To this should be added the fact that we had little ammunition and for almost 10 days we did not receive any allowances. So, dear comrade, you can imagine the position we were in. We defended ourselves as best we could, and after 10 days we were released.

Now - to you, dear comrade! German pilots and German tankmen supported us during our liberation. What you have done I cannot even express on this piece of paper. I express to you my highest

194

Konstantin Bykov

neck recognition and I can assure you that you are held in high esteem by all our soldiers. Approximately 1500 Russians prepared to attack 150 meters from us. And they certainly would have broken through if at the last minute you had not continued to bomb. You have a really good sense, since all the bomb blessing fell nearby, into the forest, and did not touch us. In addition, several large enemy concentration areas were destroyed by your thunderous raids... The results from the bombs were simply terrible, and the Russians lost the will to attack...

You did an excellent job, a job that no specialist could have done better. You laid bombs 50 meters in front of our nose, and they were appropriate here. We, of course, thought that now our last hour had come, but the bombing strikes reached exactly their goals ... |

In general, you did your job perfectly, and everything experienced will forever remain in our hearts. I say again that we owe you our lives, all of you were involved in this, and therefore: "Long live our pilots!"

If you, dear friend, have time, then write to me again. For the future, I wish you and all your comrades all the best and safe flights."

Statistics. After Kharkov, the planes of the 51st bomber squadron returned to combat operations in the Crimea, near Sevastopol. Additions on the activities of this and other squadrons in May 1942 (mainly in the Kharkov direction of interest to us) provide the following statistical materials:

| r{emsy Jogapg. Katreztv \ uadeg 51 "Food! \ E15 \$". Ete SpgoshK ats \$ OokKateshchep ipa VepsSchep. 1937 - 1945. Myugoivz Wayaz Zalrats, 1991. - b. 178 - 180.

195

"(t /00S'henNiyao9ech3) ``hePot \$761 - 1461 i elnodf iohenei9e1-03912909 en /8-edechno]
chomishnodiaeo

-^09 hiShoTsdikhii ideto]] */3-edehno] ekepijn Ya" 'demidien "'ekepidi \$" iidee vee '4 raeynpar]/ "u ogoheshoidre ilinh 'lo
ineei9e.1 cha ivdetop iilAVG op) orlinkh iote vig onchieipeno uachyaepnide[('l'a chnenchetooopedi ivdegop oi
echnne

(ipedepo

| (6, @.: (8.1 -chdeh i yish -ditop '(ed -enegichn -NEchenipe) Choiei -kedenoh 'th

-21i00 ION -chiegirod:o

I-9 9-I egei yog + h 'cho4 -IZHEZERI (] AND EZHEPIYAE

leB uch / o

|

Chop 2199209 + veshchioch 00492199

sq st (this subt key Te op te

vINUZHEf> 0101290196 ÿ poidei i iipeiyav iozteien ijezop) 'UZYAPNIaUGUPIGCHYAUT,

196

p | = eo | 30| 650668.

hedgehog [9 550975 | EN | | 90| 8 567 PIN %001 ? eyachodineoheku S88U sbOH/F ITEN

wee st

9] oh oh, I'm MO W | 6048 09 m W 5 PEN

· AJ '4909 EIA1 G#[_ + Chrome 85176 | 6058

wei ut

mef+ 66 exjodonee 6958 OI | — 887. oe monitt | 1810 rel | 69ta r[_ No9['Chon | chomah | i fsh | 6008

"t r m yar a Woof | a | chozchaeh | 6 Em zoo | both TWO | v0

197

G No. p | 9 1045/8 | _ 6004

WEI \$]

About EV y | emo | 7] 8008] 8

WEI []

198

OZONE. OGO" - 951

[| bmoyyouent | 9955 | buryuyekuenoya | est IE ZIC

r m m | 5 57| 6008

m vochaeh | ID 0x7E | G

[== 3 Cho wen [JP from [G

G No. _ [G 95 1579 IM

EZHENIE IN PV

\$69[/^8 60139 \$69[/^\$ 60119

\$59[/^8 6014

59/6 | bya. 59[/ 6 | fight. _ 9/5 NECK her) | 38 2 5OU/F 38

erol/t | 8897 6947\$ | 887 TOT | 881 | OG/U | 6009. POG | 6014 |

from/SN)"T 681^ \$5697 /^6 PEN 0[/ 60134

SESET t<oot

(02 8 TOTE

| wolf | And | V

m o m No.] >. X

|= E ch < | oh xx

> = ye)

[D 09| bt r e

9SOTT \$<59[/^-| [-9604I

[Stot 9[/^9 | [-9603a

| f - nai) SE8S 01 / (3) ° \$ Sh 'cher a / o (Thurs +569 Cho Shel -khidogP - yaohchaeh)

O O S O I E IIS: EVS

EDGE

And)

00

m

peoinen | [191 tC1/(4) | 1-a881G %0E e4leoi = | zhnonilnyyunoh her | 1609 | 19426/\$ | /-9600I

("non | (EU+U6) | | oh" pen) chohaaeh SF O/I | #-U88

[Che] yableunien | ©

us to 'diaon , her-vi vupezoi avae - chokhch4eH 981 OGI | 7-88

`Yezychn-PAO 4th I/9

"E Xia/9

experience |.

5+ E || Xx Z

> <

19455/^ < | 1-Y6ST\$N ochyodEeChen [5T0 19425/^6 | 1-Ya6S15N

what] 74:33 tO/Sh cholchaeh O111

"DYAP '4209 85-5I JAPEEOP NYA =

the same c8 / o vynshcha | CH) 99/5 | +988 9815 E

ef +

U o m

%001 `Chiaop `9209 + ee THAT GOD | 97-46044

chaaeh 'i %05 ziaq `aaop = (enohchaeh `ho) 60551 Poly | U-ya603a

echaesheovaech

9th |069 5th\$ | aiten r m ne] o og | U60bN

EEl 85

wi [2 m sho

(\$Y+that) 69/8 | 9-NITEN

evo her 881 0049719 | would | Same 09Z0t ssg/e | +-4604I togy + %001 UI + | exe chopichiel 'ie 1801 <60[/^ 6 |
U-4603YA OO OSA ZOO

Dega iochoiaAt-09i09 - AY

vomooviyav - Chu

viChashgiAe ventineE - ye

vipviyae venchieggioeatoei - UI

einepihe einene4 ig etekoyee einepzhedyaon - = EZHEENIEEITSI etoy ChiEOIL - +

:rainpar[/ '4 appidrsh x vpnovaipaYY

=

| me 6610 TU / (N < HERE

Ur mm" mmm //: 4334 |

ve p r 0 name no.

eChpehee veYA O O O PO O OOO OOO OOO OOO PASA S + PeheeeE osh ^^ OS E I PO POESSA POESK PASA: JINR

S O PO O POS O PO LLC OIS S OI 2 O P O OS LLC OO OO O S at SIA

PAYA v-5

a 18

ISHAO1 in-1 noy haaon -e4 = I hin I

(HIS {RbT Evie ya ebgechoe ionyochodig(e0io0 i-ts ya cholegoyeo oyateeyigohya)

'ATON TYAUNOTA) UICHGOHEGVUKHIII UPIGCHU,

ePweee epnohya: (1 9-) Ke7 21:59)

01928

VIN -enipeoe eilAdga ONEP 93]

epvei eeeven i ya01eioiee 01298

elinaio4n (0.1994) viv1oiep PVEI 66 -E09 10 EN ochod

iinenig20e hilAcht I

244th DIVISION OF STORM GUNS

Short story. The 244th assault gun battalion (244 5igteessri (7-AMe Pip?) was formed on June 13, 1941 in Juteborg and consisted of 3 batteries (6 assault guns in one battery). Approximately 600 people served in the division, 125 in the water battery. In July 1941, the division was sent to the 6th Army of the Army Group South and took part in the battles in the Zhytomyr region, in "breaking through the Stalin Line", striking from Korosten in the direction of the Dnieper and in the Kiev encirclement. By winter, the 244th division was in the Kharkov region and took part in defensive battles, although a veteran of the first and third formations of the 244th division (brigade) Josef Harreiter (Wosejo Nagtsetseg) reported: "December 7, when there was an attack on Pearl Harbor, we arrived in Kharkov ... There we were used to fight the partisans. We lodged in a small house for almost 6 months.

After the May battle near Kharkov, in which the division took part, being assigned to the 113th Infantry Division, an attack on Stalingrad and battles in the Red October region followed, where the division found its death. The 244th Wigitzessni (-AMEPipe of the 2nd Formation became part of the 9th Army, participated in the battles south of Bryansk, in the region of Chernigov, Gomel and Zhlobin, Pripyat and Berezina. Even before his death in the Bobruisk region in July 1944 - yes, the division was renamed the 244th assault brigade

! Interview on VIR:/\m\.\.adowape".j. The owners of the house told the Germans: "Germany is very strong. But all this space, right from Poland, is filled with partisans. Russia has a lot of minerals for war, Stalin is building industry in the Urals, and Russia cannot lose."

209

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

tools (Sarteesciu7-Bprgade). The 244th Surgeon-Birade of the 3rd formation fought on the Western Front, including the Ardennes. In April 1945, she was destroyed in the Ruhr pocket.

"244th Sturmgeschütz Brigade! was formed in June 1941 in Zinn, and Hauptmann Dr. Paul Gloger (Raz S]oreg became its commander. Adjutant - Lieutenant Dr. Schrader Rotmers The headquarters battery was headed by Lieutenant Rade (Ka4e). The commanders of the three combat batteries were lieutenants Roestel (Koe \$ {e!}, Dupont, (Pirope) and Zenefels (Gepe {e {5).

In early July, the brigade was sent by rail to the southern sector of the Eastern Front, where it arrived on July 8, 1941, and where it was assigned to the 6th Army.

The first use in combat took place in the Zhytomyr region²... In September 1941, the brigade participated in a big encirclement battle near Kiev, for crossing the Desna. The settlements of Semipolki, Ivankovo, Borispol and Baryshevka witnessed the successful use of assault guns in the month of September. October saw the brigade already in quick pursuit battles in the direction of the Donets. She took Belgorod. In the battles for Kharkov, the brigade proved itself once again," Tornau and Kurovsky told us about the first stage of the combat use of the 244th division.

The 244th division of assault guns in the Kharkov battle according to a German source. "In defensive battles in the vicinity of Kharkov and near the Donets, during the most severe Russian winter in the last 50 years, the brigade fought just as excellently. Despite the strong enemy superiority, she managed to hold her ground, and in the spring of 1942

In the primary source, the 244th division is called either a brigade or a division.

2 Here, according to veteran Josef Harreiter, soldiers of the 244th division witnessed the mass execution of Jews.

3 Togpai OvBegei to dad, Kigom\$K Egypt. ZbagtatsShepe. Her!\$ w 4er Vgapdipe. MahipShap-Wayaz. NetsogA ip4 Vopp, 1965. - 5. 174 - 175.

210

Konstantin Bykov

she participated in the counter-offensive and in the battle for Kharkov, continue the authors named by us. - In the battle for Kharkov, Wahmister Bantse (Vapge) from the 1st battery showed himself first of all. He, who had already shot down more than one enemy tank, fought here with extraordinary enthusiasm. With his gun, on his own, he shot down a strong Russian tank flock. The number of destroyed tanks was 24 units. But the whole brigade as a whole fought here successfully.

No less than 36 enemy tanks were destroyed here on 14 May.

The Wehrmacht's announcement of 15 May states the following:

"The 244th Sturmgeschütz Division (Ubappieezsno (taMePip?) in the battle in the east on May 14, 1942, shot 36 enemy tanks. Of these tanks, only Chief Warmaster Bantse personally destroyed 13 tanks."

In the period from May 13 to July 22, 1942, the 2nd battery of Hauptmann Stir's brigade (Ser) was assigned to the 113th Infantry Division. During all these 10 weeks, she constantly showed her extraordinary courage. In the encirclement battle south of Kharkov, during the capture of the bridgehead near the Donets and before the battle in the big bend of the Don and the wounding of Hauptmann Sttir, the 2nd battery of the 244th brigade knocked out 66 enemy tanks of the T-34 and KV-1 types.

On May 13, the battery was subordinated to the 260th Infantry Regiment. When the regiment, located south of Kharkov, was attacked by a large number of Russian tanks, Hauptmann Stir came out to meet them. He personally rolled out 400 meters in front of his line and shot 6 enemy tanks with his gun and damaged two others.

After that, he advanced to the dominant height between the 260th and 261st Infantry Regiments and prevented a freshly launched Soviet attack there. When the division withdrew troops, the Hauptmann with his battery was in the guard and forced the Soviet tank groups to retreat.

On May 17, the battery came under the control of the 261st Infantry Regiment. And on the same day, Hauptmann Stir surpassed himself. With only four guns, he destroyed 16 T-34s. Myself

211

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

he personally destroyed one KV-1, in which there was a Russian brigade commander.

During an immediately organized counterattack, one gun knocked out two more T-34s.

May 18 was again the day of a major battle for the Shire battery. Many enemy guns were destroyed. Among them are two 18 cm and two 12 cm.

395. tie EO [4+

re! SIATKOM RatKom 16.-26.Ma 1942 ty o 4% 20 30 113. 2% ' Kt A o 60 btlen

No. 5 | „@ girre. 305. u ' op" about Ebe (309)> U: and

G "2-7 eye \$76 Roman Riameh 6

© ye 3 05

5.< .

Il «` ,4 \$ ase `/ ,57 24.5. 397

Those 298. [Kmy

ran(bKo

—> < pof [usomaua y {

Megeyoa Atsu (ayip

ate 9

305.12, orc 3 576 - Maik annni}> Aps "+

The area of combat operations of the 244th division of self-propelled guns

(map from the history of the 305th infantry division according to Haupt's book)

'
Togpai OBeg\$eschptati, Kago\K! Egap7. ZagatShepe. ERe]\$ w 4er Vgapdipe. MahipShap-Wayye. Netsog4
ppd Vopi, 1965. \$. 175 - 176.

212

Konstantin Bykov

The 244th division of assault guns in the Kharkov battle according to Russian and American sources. In May 1942, the 113th Infantry Division, which, as we know, was attached to the 244th SPG Battalion, was assigned to the reserve of the 6th Army. Geographically, the quartering area of the division was located in front of the western and northwestern part of the Barvenkovsky salient. The forward positions on the German side were occupied (from north to south and front to east) by units of the 62nd Infantry Division, the 454th Security Division and the 4th Romanian Infantry Division (approximately from the Bereki area in the north to the Lozova area in the south) . K. On May 12, the main forces of the 113th Infantry Division were located in the area of the Berestovaya River and the Kazachy Maidan, 20 km behind the junction between the 62nd

infantry and 454th security divisions. Two more battalions of the 113th Infantry Division were located to the south, in the Orelka area, behind the junction between the 4th and 11th Romanian Infantry Divisions. Both "groupings" of the 113th Infantry Division were located on the Soviet dividing lines between the 6th Army and the Bobkinai group and between the Bobkin group and the 57th Army. Unfortunately, the German source did not tell us who the other two batteries of the 244th Battalion were assigned to. Therefore, we will assume, although this is not a fact, that all three batteries of the division were assigned to three regiments of the 113th Infantry Division.

The 113th Infantry Division included the 260th, 261st and 268th Infantry Regiments and the 87th Artillery Regiment. All other parts of the division wore a divisional number. On May 10, 1942, Friedrich Ziekwolf (Sepegaletap(Epedis 7IsKuo) handed over command of the division to Hans-Heinrich von Arnim (Sepegaleschtag Nap\$-Neshis 51 wop Agpit).

On May 12, units of the 454th and 62nd German divisions were crushed by units of the 6th Army of Gorodnyansky and the army group of Bobkin, who quickly advanced westward, to where, between the Orel and Berestovaya rivers, there were two regiments of the 113th Infantry Division and units of the 244th division of self-propelled guns.

On May 13, the 411th division of Colonel M.A. Pesochin and the 266th division of Colonel A.A. Tavantsev with the support of the 5th

213

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Guards Tank Brigade! and the 38th Tank Brigade, Lieutenant Colonel P.Z. Zurina (all formations from the 6th Army) continued to move forward. Their opponents were units of the 62nd Infantry Division and the 261st and 268th Regiments of the 113th Infantry Division located behind it (by this time the battalions located in the south had returned to the division). The 6th Cavalry Corps, Major General A.A. Noskov and the 7th Tank Brigade of Colonel I.A. Yurchenko. Their opponent was the 454th Security Division and the 260th Regiment of the 113th Infantry Division behind it.

"The enemy realized what a threat the units of the 6th cavalry corps of General A.A. Noskov, and threw numerous infantry with the support of tanks into counterattacks. But the cavalry repulsed all these assaults and successfully continued the offensive," writes I.Kh. Bagramyan about the first clash of Soviet troops with the Sturmgeschütz battery, which took place on May 13². "In an attempt to destroy units of the 6th Cavalry Corps that had advanced beyond the Orel River, the enemy again brought the 260th Regiment of the 113th Infantry Division into battle on the morning of May 13, reinforced by a company of tanks," reports "Front Illustration"².

Comparing the sources (plus Glantz's maps)*, we can come to the conclusion that on this day the battery of Hauptmann Stir entered the battle with the 7th Tank Brigade of Colonel Yurchenko. It is obvious that other batteries of the 244th division of self-propelled guns, if they were assigned to the 261st and 268th regiments of the 113th infantry division, entered the battle with the machines of the 5th and 38th brigade, respectively. At the same time, it should be taken into account that the headquarters of the 113th Infantry Division, located

'
Filed by VYr://tesvsogrz.tKKa.ga, 5th Guards. brigade (former 142nd brigade) commanded: major general of tank troops N.F. Mikhailov - until May 15 and Lieutenant Colonel M.T. Melnychuk - from May 16.

2 Bagramyan I.Kh. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1977. - S. 93.

G. Alushko Andrey, Kolomiets Maxim. Front illustration. Battles for Kharkov in May 1942. - 2000. - No. 6.

* S/apk Rama M. AChaz apa Zigueu. Tre Zole{ KVagKou OYepyatue, 12-29 Mau 1942 (Ba'a Slape Prodisk, 1998).

Konstantin Bykov

in the Lozova area! that the , lay on the offensive axis of the 266th infantry division of the 38th brigade. Therefore, it is not excluded 38th brigade collided with two self-propelled guns at once. |

On May 17, the troops of the 6th Cavalry Corps and the 7th Tank Brigade, advancing even further to the west, fought fierce battles for Krasnograd with the 576th Infantry Regiment of the 305th Infantry Division and the 261st Infantry Regiment of the 113th Infantry Regiment transferred here. -th infantry division, which was attached to the 2nd battery of the 244th division. And, if we believe the report of a German source about the destruction of the KV-1 tank that day, in which the "Russian brigade commander" was located, then we can talk about Colonel I.A. Yurchenko...

Lozovaya is a settlement in 7-8 km of the Berestovaya river.

6TH ROMANIAN ARMY CORPS

Brief history of the 6th Romanian army corps and its divisions. Their weapons and organization. Four infantry divisions of the Romanian Royal Army took part in the Battle of Kharkov in May 1942: 1st, 2nd, 4th and 20th. It is difficult to establish the subordination of these divisions according to the documents that we have. Some of these divisions were part of the 6th Army Romanian Corps. Some - in the German 3rd Army (motorized), 8th and 11th Army Corps. After the end of the Battle of Kharkov, Marshal Antonescu stated that "the soldiers of the 6th Army Corps, 1st, 2nd, 4th and 20th divisions took part in one of the biggest battles in history." Therefore, we will probably not be very mistaken if we consider all four Romanian divisions to be divisions of the 6th AK (Rom.) - Sogrs 6 Agtai. In any case, this would be a lesser mistake than the mistake of a well-known German historian, which entered the Russian-language texts, who, talking about the Battle of Kharkov, calls the 6th Romanian corps the 4th.

During the Battle of Kharkov, the 6th Corps was commanded by Lieutenant General Corneliu Dragalina (Corpe!a Ogagaipa). The 11th German Army Corps, in whose zone the Romanian divisions were operating, was commanded by General of Infantry Joachim von Kortzfleisch (Cerega 4er sashchepe Goasrit von Kog7He1sV).

The regimental composition of the Romanian divisions - participants in the Kharkov battle - was as follows:

1st Infantry Division (Brigadier General Sop\$ap!p Rapay): 85th and 93rd Infantry Regiments, 5th Mountain (Wapayup) Regiment, [th and 38th Artillery Regiments.

216

Konstantin Bykov

2nd Infantry Division (Brigadier General Mnosoyae Sftegaga or Brigadier General Oitipi Tidose): 1st, 26th and 31st Infantry Regiments, 9th and 14th Artillery Regiments.

4th Infantry Division (General SBeogrVe SlaakK): 5th, 20th and 21st Infantry Regiments, 2nd and 10th Artillery Regiments.

20th Infantry Division (Brigadier General SKeogoWe Steogresst): 82nd, 83rd and 91st Infantry Regiments, 39th and 40th Artillery Regiments.

Each division (17,500 men), except for regiments, included: a partially motorized reconnaissance detachment, one anti-tank company (six 47-mm esbpe! 4er guns of the 1936 model), an air defense company and an engineer battalion.

The Romanian infantry regiment consisted of three or two battalions. After 1941 some divisions were re-equipped, rearmed and reorganized. Divisions located on

front, including the divisions of the 6th AK (Rom.) - 1, 2, 4 and 20th? - were only partially reorganized and had a lower combat potential.

Each infantry regiment included: a sapper company, a reconnaissance company and a heavy weapons company (6-gun platoon of 81.4-mm Vgapa E mortars, 6-gun platoon of 37-mm Vog anti-tank guns and 6-gun platoon of 47-mm anti-tank guns esppeaeg). In addition, each infantry battalion had its own heavy weapons company: one platoon with eight machine guns and one platoon with six 60-mm Vgapo mortars.

Before the Battle of Kharkov, the number of battalions in the regiment was reduced to two, but the platoon was increased from 3 to 4 squads (from 30 to 40 people). Each squad had a light machine gun and a 60-mm Vgapa mortar. The heavy weapons battalion company was also reorganized: it now included four machine gun platoons (four machine guns each) and one mortar platoon (four Vgap® 81.4 mm mortars. The new regimental heavy weapons company consisted of three platoons of 37-mm anti-tank guns (six Voyugz 1936 models in each platoon) and one platoon of 47-mm anti-tank guns (six guns of the Vte systems

217

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

yes/5svpedeg/WoSheg). In addition, the regiment received a three-platoon company of heavy mortars (two 120-mm RM/Kezia mortars per platoon). As a result of the reorganization, the Romanian infantry division was reduced to 13,500 men and increased its firepower.

The Romanian infantryman was armed with a lot of captured Soviet weapons. The 7.62 mm Mosin rifle became the standard weapon of snipers; scouts and platoon commanders were armed with Soviet PPD-40 and PIISH-41 assault rifles. But the main weapon of the infantry was the Czech 7.92-mm rifle B (7th] ouKa Vgpo) of the 1924 model of the year (a version of the German Maitzeg 98 K rifle). Each infantry squad was armed with either the old KhV light machine gun, model 1930, or the new Czech /V-53, model 1937. There were also Austrian 8-mm machine guns esVar21o\$e of the 1907/1912 model. As a personal weapon, the machine gunner had a 9-mm pistol \eur of the 1912 model. Grenades were used Czech or Romanian.

Romanian artillery was subdivided into army, corps and divisional artillery. The corps artillery consisted of a heavy motorized artillery regiment (one battalion with twelve 105 mm EsVpedeg cannons

Romanian anti-tankers with a 47 mm gun

218

Konstantin Bykov

1936, the second - with twelve 150-mm howitzers \$ Code of the 1934 model). In terms of firepower and mobility, these regiments were comparable to the German ones. In addition to the heavy artillery regiment, each corps also had a separate heavy motorized artillery battalion.

The artillery of an infantry division consisted of two artillery regiments, consolidated into an artillery brigade. The odd-numbered regiment consisted of two battalions with twelve 75 mm guns in each battalion (espe4er-1897, Zppeaer-Riou-1902/1936, Ktarr-1904,1912) and one battalion with eight 100-mm howitzers (Zkoda - 1914/1934, 1930). An even-numbered regiment consisted of one battalion with twelve 75mm guns and one battalion with eight 100mm howitzers. After the losses of 1941, the artillery regiment with an odd number was deprived of a division of 75-mm guns. With the accumulation of captured Soviet weapons in the Romanian army, the 37-mm Bofors guns were replaced with Soviet forty-fives, and 75-mm guns with Soviet 76.2-mm guns.

The absence of domestic (Romanian) weapons in the Romanian army is shocking. The dependence of the armed forces on foreign suppliers led, for example, to the fact that after the German attack on France, Renault stopped deliveries to Romania of components for the licensed Romanian light armored tracked tractor Ma[axa OE. These tractors were assembled in Bucharest and used in motorized anti-tank units. With the cessation of deliveries, the production of tractors also ceased; of the 300 already issued, about 270 were knocked out in the first two years of the war on the Eastern Front ...

The future commander of the 6th Romanian Army Corps Corneliu Dragalina was born in 1887. The main stages of his service were told to us by Victor Nitul:

1907 - Dragalina graduated from the engineering and artillery school;

M sug Mzi, vyp://mopa\ag2.go.

219

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

1915 - captain in the 4th artillery regiment;

1916 - stopped and led the retreating infantry into a counterattack, thereby saving the situation on the front. Awarded with the Order of Mihai 3rd class;

1919 - 1921 - major, studying at the Military Academy;

1920 - lieutenant colonel;

1928 - colonel;

1935 - brigadier general;

1940 - Major General, commander of the 6th Corps;

1941 - the corps is redeployed from Romania to Odessa, then - to the Crimea.

The further fates of Dragalina and the 6th AK (Rom.) are interconnected:

1942 - Battle of Kharkov. The corps, numbering 64,120 people, captured 26,432 Soviet soldiers and officers. Subordinated to the 1st Panzer Army, the 6th Corps advances to the east; in 20 days, 450 km were covered with battles. On July 19, 1942, the 6th AK (Romanian) was subordinated to the 4th Panzer Army and in early September approached the area south of Stalingrad. Here he is part of the 4th Romanian army. By this time, Corneliu Dragalina had been awarded the Knight's Cross, the Order of Mihai 2nd class, and promoted to lieutenant general. On November 20, the 6th Corps came under the main blow of the Soviet troops. One division of the 6th AK was lost in the encirclement, two more divisions of the corps suffered very heavy losses, but were able to retreat and organize a defensive line together with the German 29th motorized infantry division. On November 25, the corps came under attack from the Soviet 51st Army, but again survived and took part in an unsuccessful operation to release the encircled 6th Army.

1943 - the remains of the corps were sent to Romania, Dragalina was appointed military commander of Bukovina.

1944 - Dragalina was appointed inspector of the mechanized troops.

1949 - died in Bucharest.

The 1st Infantry Division, as of September 20, 1941, consisted of: 326 officers, 364 sergeants,

% 220

Konstantin Bykov

15,211 privates; 1,338 horse-drawn wagons or carts (\$2,201), 6,686 horses, 72 oxen, 15 motorcycles, 86 bicycles; 13,437 rifles, 415 light machine guns, 32 anti-tank guns and 132 field guns.

In September-October 1941, the division fought in the Odessa region as part of the 5th Corps. After the Soviet troops abandoned Odessa, the 1st division was transferred to the 6th Romanian Army Corps and relocated to the Krivoy Rog region, where it performed security functions.

On January 10, 1942, the division received an order from the Army Group "South" to redeploy to the area of Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye. The 400 km march was made on foot in frosts of 30-40 degrees. After that, the division, without the remaining artillery in Mariupol, took up positions in the Pavlograd region between the remnants of the 100th and 298th infantry divisions and was subordinated to the 11th army corps.

On January 29, 1942, the 1st division was on the defensive line between Kokhovka and Samoilovka, 5-35 km south of Lozovaya.

On February 1, it was attacked by Soviet troops and until February 13, together with the 298th German Infantry Division, fought to hold positions near Samoilovka and Kryshypovka (20 km south of Lozova).

On February 14, the 1st Infantry Division (Romanian) took part in the offensive of the 11th German Army Corps on Lozovaya.

On February 20, the front of the 1st Infantry Division was broken by two Soviet cavalry divisions, which advanced to Sofiyivka (10 km southeast of Lozovaya). K. On February 22, the 1st division retreated along the Vasilyevka-Sofiyivka line.

State of 1942 (according to Ogazowski and Ustog Mio): rifles - 14,848; easel machine guns 550; light machine guns - 509; assault rifles (submachine guns) — 149; flamethrowers - 30; 60-mm mortars - 87; 81.4 mm mortars - 36; 120-mm mortars - 18; light anti-tank guns - 56; heavy anti-tank guns - 6; air defense guns - 14; 75-mm field guns - 36; 100-mm field howitzers - 24.

221

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

From \$ 2 at about. AE th O

share

A

a i 7 chom : 5 \$ meg a e 4 t w 59 #9. AND

m . *.

RU. 5703 >: a t _ g. 2: 2%. t } |

=. H " Vu k and t om m > And ` _ SHE. 1. NOT ^ | 22.1.19%2. ..

6th Romanian Corps near Kharkov. February 1942

From May 20, the division took part in the German offensive south of Kharkov, captured Aleksandrovka, Novoupplatnoye, Proletarskoye, Dimitrova, Domakha and Lozovaya. Took part in the destruction of the surrounded Soviet troops.

By the end of December 1942, 200-300 people remained in the 1st Infantry Division.

The 4th Infantry Division was sent to Odessa in September 1941. In April 1942, she was relocated to the area south of Kharkov, where she replaced the German 113th Infantry Division being withdrawn to the reserve (in the Ligovka area). From May 20

y,

222

Konstantin Bykov

The 4th Infantry Division (Romanian) took part in the German offensive from the area northwest of Lozovaya in the direction of the Bereka valley, captured Fedorovka, Mikhailovka, Tsaredarovka, Artelnoe and Alexandrovka. K. On December 31, 1942, there were 250 people in the 4th division.

On the eve of the Kharkov battle. The Romanian divisions, mixed with the 298th German Infantry Division!, bordered the southwestern edge of the Barvenkovsky salient. Their front was built in the form of the letter "Yo", inside of which was the city of Lozovaya, occupied by Soviet troops. The vertical component of the Romanian front was occupied from north to south by the 4th infantry division (the enemy was the 270th infantry division of the Bobkin group)?, the 298th German infantry division of the 1st infantry division (the 150th and army). The horizontal component of the Romanian front was occupied from west to east - the 2nd and 20th infantry divisions (99th infantry division of the 57th army).

The 20th infantry division at the time of the start of the battle was in reserve, behind the positions of the 2nd infantry division. She took her place at the front after the start of the Soviet offensive, entering the junction between the 2nd Romanian infantry and the 1st German mountain divisions. The northern neighbor of the left-flank 4th Romanian infantry division was the German 454th security division from the 8th Army Corps of the 6th army.

The Soviet formations opposing the Romanians were commanded by:

270th Rifle Division - Major General 3.Yu. Kutlin.

150th Rifle Division - Major General D.G. Egorov.

317th Rifle Division - Colonel D.I. Yakovlev (there were many Azerbaijanis in the division).

99th Rifle Division - Colonel V.Ya. Vladimirov.

The 298th Infantry Division consisted of the 525th, 526th, and 527th Infantry Regiments, the 298th Artillery Regiment, the 298th Engineer Battalion, and the 298th Reconnaissance Battalion.

2 The opposing Soviet units are indicated in parentheses.

223

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

6th Romanian Army Corps on the defensive. The author of the materials from which we took the information for this book is Georgiy Tinitza (Cheor? Ve Titssa)!. This information was translated and sent to us by Victor Nita (Victor Mio) from Bucharest.

"Soviet troops, ahead of the Germans, regrouped their forces south of Kharkov for a planned offensive. It began on May 12, 1942, after a 60-minute

artillery preparation," Georgy Tynitsa begins his story. - The Southwestern Front broke the defenses of the German 6th Army and in three days advanced approximately 25 km along the Volchansk-Kharkov axis and 20-30 km along the Barvenkovo-Kharkov axis.

After assessing the situation, Field Marshal von Bock decided to limit the penetration of the enemy, deprive him of the possibility of flank maneuver and access to the rear of the group of General Kortzfleisch and launch his offensive according to plan?. The Romanian 6th Corps was given the mission to protect the flank and rear of the Kortzfleisch group?. And

The German 113th Infantry and 1st Mountain Divisions were moved to another area*, and the 6th Corps was to extend its front to the Samara River. The Romanian 2nd Infantry Division occupied the positions of the 1st Mountain Division, and on May 7 the 20th Infantry Division was ordered to force

| Re {agto! Moga-Ropis, March 17, 1941 - March 4, 1942, Ejiga Ripa. Siy. (co!. Rete Osh, co1. Ze/ap Vayazap, co]. Aezapagi Oshi, co]. nap1aed {Petaepa! \uaz \ugoe Bu co/1. Speoteye Trgsa) Kotyone, Visigebi, 1999.

2 Offensive according to the Friederikus-1 plan.

3 Kortzfleisch commanded the 11th AK, which included only one German infantry division - the 298th. It is obvious that he was the actual commander-mentor of the 6th AK (Rom.). With the exception of the 20th Infantry Division (Rom.), which was subordinate to Mackensen's 3rd Corps.

The 4th 113th Infantry Division was transferred to the reserve of the German 6th Army and was deployed in the area of the Berestovaya River, on which Krasnograd is located, the extreme point of the Soviet offensive. The 1st mountain, in order to condense the front of Mackensen's 3rd motorized corps, moved east.

224

Konstantin Bykov

march from Petropavlovka and take up positions in the Osadchee area.

The Soviet offensive northeast of Kharkov was halted by a German counterattack at Nepokrytaya2?. However, south of Kharkov, the German defense was broken through, and enemy cavalry divisions and tanks reached the eastern suburbs of Krasnograd. Thus, the left flank and rear of the Romanian 6th corps and the Kortzfleisch group were at risk of encirclement.

Assessing the situation, General Kortzfleisch sealed the front between Samara and Ternovka. General Dragalina (commander of the 6th Corps) created on his left flank a group of General Georgescu, with the mission of stopping any enemy advance between Orel and Bogata.

As of May 11, 1942, according to the American military historian D. Glantz, the 4th Romanian division was actually part of the 6th German army, while being part of the 6th AK (Rom.) 17th armies: The 8th Army Corps of the 6th Army, consisting of the 108th Hungarian Infantry Division, the 454th Security Division (and the 113th Infantry Division in reserve), occupied positions from Upper Bishkin to Mironovka. In the zone of this corps, between Mironovka and Pokrovsky, they occupied the positions of units of the 4th Infantry Division (Rom.). On May 12, just in this area, between Grushino and Mironovka, Bobkin's army group went on the offensive. After breaking through the front to a depth of 7-8 km, the 6th cavalry corps of Major General A.A. Noskov and the 7th Tank Brigade of Colonel I.A. Yurchenko. The blow also fell on the 4th pd (rum.), which

'
The 20th division, before going to the front, concentrated in the Osadcheya, Good, Alexandropol area, 35 km southeast of Lozovaya.

2 Northern grouping of Soviet troops (21st, 28th and 38th armies) were counterattacked by the 3rd and 23rd tank divisions. Uncovered was one of the key points of this struggle.

3 Sapk Raza M. QuagKoh 1942. Apatyutu ora Mitsag O! for eg. Zagredop KosKuShe Setmge. MU (Ribl5Ved pcs She Optsed 3 {sche \$ Bu Zagredop, 1998, Bu Ram M. S] an {2). — 5.105.

8 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 225

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

began to withdraw in the western (to Krasnograd) and southwestern (to Sakhnovshchina) directions.

The area south-west of the direction of the breakthrough was the left flank of the Romanian grouping of troops, which can be called the "Kortzfleisch group", if you add the regiments of the 298th infantry division and the corps of the 11th AK to the 6th Corps of Dragalina. We did not find a breakdown of the composition of Georgescu's group anywhere, but if Georgescu is not the namesake of the commander of the 20th Infantry Division (Romanian), then it can be assumed that Georgescu's group included units of the 20th division, which was located in the southern not active, sector of the front.

"On May 15 and 16, taking advantage of the retreat of the German 454th Infantry Division from the Koch (KosP) group!, the Soviets pressed on the left flank of the Georgescu group in order to penetrate between Sakhnovshchina and the Bogataya River and go into the rear of the group," continues Georgy Tynitsa . - By the evening of May 16, the Romanian troops, having organized a strong defense, managed to stop the enemy offensive.

On the front of the 1st Romanian infantry division, which passed along the Aleksandrovka-Mikhailovka-Nikolaevka line, 2-3 Soviet battalions with aviation and artillery support occupied on May 16 the positions of the 5th Uap og? regiment, but were later stopped by a counterattack*.

At the same time, the troops of the Romanian 4th division were attacked by 2-3 battalions in the area of Novaya Alexandrovka.

GK On May 15, Bobkin's group was already at Krasnograd, threatening an important railway. to Poltava and Dnepropetrovsk and roads. between the 6th and 17th German armies. Not far from Krasnograd, 15 km to the southeast, the Konradi group was defending, which included units of the 4th Infantry Division (Romanian) and the regiment of the 298th Infantry Division. This group was attacked by the Soviet 393rd Rifle Division. The remnants of the 454th division (obviously, they are called the Koch group) were located southeast of the Konradi group, at the junction of the 393rd and 270th sd.

? The German command decided to strike at the left flank of Bobkin in the area of Sakhnovshchina and Andreevka with the forces of the 4th Romanian Infantry Division and one regiment of the German 298th Infantry Division (the troops of the 298th Infantry Division were scattered along the entire Romanian front - by 100 - 120 km).

3 UApayun - mountainous (can also be translated as jaeger). The Romanian UApayup regiments did not differ in state from ordinary infantry regiments.

The 4th 150th Rifle Division pushed back the 1st Romanian Infantry Division by 6 km.

226

Konstantin Bykov

In the sector of the 2nd Romanian Division and units of the 298th German Infantry Division, the Soviet offensive between May 12-16 was not intense.

To expand its salient to the west of Izyum, the Soviet command attracted most of its forces, significantly moving away from the Donets and supply bases. Under these conditions, the German Army Group "South" launched a counteroffensive. Romanian 6th Corps (1st, 4th, 2nd and 20th

infantry divisions) defended the western and southern sides of the salient, with a total of 64,120 soldiers. The 1st and 4th Infantry Divisions defended the 50 km front line south of Aleksandrovka; The 2nd and 20th divisions had a 35-kilometer strip in the area of Novaya Pavlovka and ýý0 (apoe).

On May 17, 1942, the Axis offensive began. By May 19, the German troops, advancing 40-50 kilometers, reached the Donets in the Petrovskaya area, threatening to encircle the Soviet forces south of Kharkov. At that moment, the Soviet command tried to organize a breakthrough from the (Barvenkovo) salient.

6th Romanian Army Corps on the offensive. Until May 20, only the left flank of the 4th Romanian division and the Georgescu group took part in heavy fighting, which were hit by the Bobkin army group. When the Soviet command recovered from the shock caused by the German counteroffensive, it turned out that the threat of encirclement hung over the 57th Army and the threat of cutting it off from the Bobkin group and the 6th Army. In order to prevent such a development of events, the 57th Army began a systematic withdrawal of its troops from the Romanian front to the northeast.

In this sector, the 68th regiment of the 298th infantry division was opposed by the 317th infantry division; 2nd infantry division (Rom.) - 99th Soviet division. The tasks of the Soviet (57A) and Romanian (6AK) troops were similar - to hold their front, to cover the flanks of active groups of troops.

2 Axis (Hitler) is a very interesting term. Its interestingness lies in the fact that this term was almost never used by the Germans themselves, but was actively used by them.
allies.

227

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

On May 20, the 150th and 99th Rifle Divisions, opposing the Romanian troops, began to withdraw to Bratolyubovka on the Britai River, northeast of Lozovaya.

On May 21, while continuing to hold its right flank against the 4th Infantry Division (Rom.), the 57th Army withdrew its 317th, 99th and 351st Rifle Divisions from Uplatnoe to Rudaevo (south of Lozovaya) and further to Smirnovka (north of -east of Lozovaya).

On May 22, as a result of an attack by the Romanian 4th and 1st infantry divisions on parts of the 270th and 150th divisions, Artel, Mikhailovka, Udarnik and Novouplatnoye were taken. At the end of that day, between the 270th and 150th Rifle Divisions, a 15-20 km gap gaped, occupied only by individual Soviet units.

On May 23, the 1st Infantry Division (Rom.) occupied Lozovaya.

On May 24, the 113th infantry division, the 305th infantry division, the 454th security division, the Georgescu group and the 1st Romanian infantry division attacked Paraskovia and Pisarevka on the front in the direction of Ligovka (393rd infantry division, 266th infantry division). The extermination of the encircled Soviet troops began.

“On May 20, the Romanian 6th Corps and the German 298th division of the Kortzfleisch group joined the offensive,” Georgiy Tinita tells about these days. - The 1st Infantry Division of Brigadier General Con%ap ip Rapa was the spearhead of the attack. At 0315, after a 15-minute artillery preparation, she attacked the positions of the Soviet 973rd Rifle Regiment on the Mikhailovka-Proletarskoye line.

The 93rd Infantry Regiment, supported by an artillery battalion and a mortar battery, advanced in the direction of Aleksandrovka and Novouplatnoye. The 85th Regiment, advancing from Proletarsky, supported by the artillery battalion and the 5th WapJog! regiment, was supposed to take a height of 177.4 and secure the flank of the division. The 710th battalion was in reserve.

The 4th division of Major General SPVeogeje Slatsk began the attack at 0330 hours with two regiments in the first line west of

According to Glants (op. cit. p. 199), the 1st Romanian division, which was advancing on Lozovaya that day, was opposed by the 150th Rifle Division. As for the 270th Rifle Division of the 973rd Rifle Regiment, they left this area to the northwest, where they were confronted by the 4th Romanian Division and the remnants of the 454th Security Division.

228

Konstantin Bykov

Alexandrovka. His mission was to take Fedorovka.

The 2nd division of Brigadier General Oitipi Tidose, also with two regiments in the first line, from positions between Samoilovka and the northeast of Andreevka, advanced on Novouplatnoye. On its right flank was the 20th Infantry Division, on the left - the German 525th regiment of the 298th divisions.

The 20th division (without one regiment) of Brigadier General Sfeogeve Seogressi advanced on Proletarskoye from the heights north of Zayotkshpa. On the right flank was the German 3rd Panzer Corps.

The left flank of the 6th Corps was supported by a group of General Georgescu, which in the period of May 20-23 blocked Soviet attempts to break through to the Sakhnovshchina-Chernoglazovka road.

The 1st Division ran into difficulties due to its vulnerable right flank (the German 298th Division began to advance later) and strong enemy resistance. By the end of the day, the 93rd regiment managed to take heights in | km north of Paid. The 85th Infantry Regiment and the 5th Udpog! Regiment moved slightly northeast of Udarnik, to Hill 174.4.

During the night, the division commander changed the axis of the offensive: Novouplatnoye - KogotepkKo railway station. The main strike force was the southern group (the 93rd infantry regiment, reinforced by the 710th battalion, and the 85th infantry regiment), which, supported by three artillery battalions, was supposed to take the heights north of Uplatny.

The 2nd Battalion of the 5th Wapajug! Regiment and the 2nd Battalion of the 612th German Infantry Regiment formed the northern group. They were to take Hill 177.4 and advance to heights 3 km northwest of Lozovaya.

The offensive began at 0400. A fierce struggle was waged for every long-term defensive structure and for every trench that came across on the way. By morning 22

The fighting was carried out along the railroad running from the south to Lozovaya. The Samoilovka, Novouplatnoye, and Proletarskoye stations were located in the combat area.

229

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

In May, the 85th Infantry Regiment took Novouplatnoe and Hill 156 to the northeast of the village and thus helped the 93rd Regiment advance towards Uplatnoe. The southern group hurried to Proletarskoye, Domakh and Lozova, while the northern group continued to advance on Novaya Ivanovka.

The 93rd infantry regiment occupied Proletarskoe, and the 85th was in the area between Novouplatny and Nestelievka.

On May 23, at about 1030 hours, the southern group took Domakha, and at 1200 hours Lozovaya was in the hands of the Rumanian troops. On the same day, the 4th Infantry Division occupied Poltava, and the 2nd Infantry Division helped the 1st advance on Lozovaya.

On May 24, Soviet troops began to retreat to the north and northeast. The 6th Corps followed close behind. The next day the 1st and 2nd divisions entered into heavy fighting with the enemy rearguards in the area of Krasnopavlovka. This was the last serious resistance that had to be faced, and on May 27 the 6th Corps reached the Bereka River, where they took up positions between Mikhailovka and Fedorovka? *.

6th building in the last days of the boiler. During the liquidation of the boiler, the 6th AC (Romanian) was located on its western and southwestern borders. The positions occupied by the 6th Romanian Corps, just as before the start of the battle, were lined up in the form of the letter "L". The vertical line, from north to south, was occupied by the II and 2nd divisions. Horizontal - 20th plz.

The 4th Infantry Division, obviously having suffered heavy losses, was at that time in the Rozhdestvensky area - south of

! Krasnopavlovka is located 30 km north of Lozovaya.

2? Mikhailovka - Fedorovka - this is the blocking line of the Kharkov pocket from its western and southwestern sides.

3 East on Lozovenka, in the center of the boiler, units of the 16th TD, 60th Infantry Division (Mot.) and 1st Guards Division advanced. From the north and west, this last hearth of the Kharkov pocket was pressed by the 305th division of the 23rd division; from the south - the 100th lpd with a reinforced Croatian regiment.

230

Konstantin Bykov

did not take part in the elimination of the main source of the boiler and did not take part in its liquidation.

Dmitry Nebolsin, who twice visited the May Kharkov encirclement, spoke about the actions of the Romanian troops in the last days of the Kharkov catastrophe. Having left the encirclement, he was again sent to the boiler - he was dropped by parachute into the area where the headquarters of the encircled 6th Army was supposed to be. The last location of this headquarters was the village of Rakitnoye, which was located on the Mikhailovka-Fedorovka line, occupied by the 6th Romanian Corps. |

"Terrible numbers! Of the one hundred and forty people (dropped by parachute. - Auth.), twenty were killed and thirty-six seriously wounded, - said D. Nebolsin. — Not a single middle commander remained, the lieutenants died — platoon commanders, junior political instructor Melkov, my deputy. What kind of guys they were! The company was thinned out, not joining the battle. The mood of the fighters was nowhere worse ...

Overcoming the pain, together with the commander of the commandant's platoon, I walked around our positions. Along the front and on the flanks, the soldiers of the company occupied the trenches dug by someone before us. From the rear, in the near-estate ditches, the commandant's platoon was located. Wasting no time, the soldiers deepened the trenches, dug "fox holes", checked weapons. On the machine-gun platforms they put up their blunt stigmas of "maxims". There was a deceptively unpredictable silence, and only in the blue cloudless sky the larks rang. The morning sun was getting kinder and warmer, a light mist was rising from the ground, and there was a smell of wormwood and black soil.

Finally, the enemy infantry moved in our direction. It became clearly visible how the chains of soldiers were swaying. A little more, and someone's keen eye saw specific Romanian satchels sticking out from behind the backs of enemy soldiers.

- The motherfuckers are coming! Romanians! Someone shouted with all their might. And suddenly, at that very moment, I heard the sound of approaching planes.

Two planes, one after the other, described a circle over the farm,

231

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

go for a landing. In the meantime, the first line of Romanians approached, lay down and opened machine-gun fire. We were silent. The chain rose, ran for a while, and lay down again. Her maneuver was repeated by the chains coming from behind. But our machine gunners clung to the "maxims". A minute or two, and as soon as the Romanians went to run, at once, on command, the machine guns shuddered and rumbled over the entire steppe. The enemy's chain seemed to be cut, she lay down and began to back away, leaving the dead and wounded.

The landing and loading of the arriving aircraft was in full swing ...

...The planes flew away. And when they became barely noticeable, a plume of black smoke stretched from one of them. Did it arrive? Maybe it's better that I stayed on the ground and didn't fly?

Now there was only one thing left for us: to hold out until the evening, at all costs - come what may! We had enough ammunition, water, food. The staff officers left something, they even abandoned it, or maybe they forgot a whole bag of money. Who needed them?

Two squat armored personnel carriers hurried to help the Romanians. Winding across the steppe, they rushed to our positions. Following them, the chains of the Romanians also rose. I have well mastered the truth suggested by someone that in battle, as in chess, the one who first of all thinks hard wins. I thought a lot before the fight. I considered various options. Of course, I knew little about the military sciences, because I did not study them, but my ingenuity worked, it made me think and find answers. And so he immediately gave the command:

- Stop shooting! Let it get closer! Grenades and bottles to 60!

Armored personnel carriers with submachine gunners burst into the hundred-meter foreground and, shouting "Hyundai hoh!" as they ran, rushed along our trenches. That was the end of them! Grenades and bottles with a combustible mixture flew into armored personnel carriers, two powerful bonfires flared up at once near our trenches, explosions followed one after another, sparks flew with a crack from flaming vehicles, heart-rending cries of burning alive

232

Konstantin Bykov

the Germans pierced the district. German soldiers jumped out of armored personnel carriers, fell out and rolled on the ground, engulfed in flames.

- Fire! Fire! - the command sounded, and our machine guns finished off everyone who tried to get up ...

The Romanians did not follow the Germans. Too terrible a picture happened to them to see. They lay down about five hundred meters from our trenches, they did not rise to a new attack. True, some of them made an attempt to go around us from the flank, but, having stumbled upon the barrage fire of the Maxims, they retreated back.

Seeing that it was not so easy to take us, the enemy burst into a flurry of mortar fire. Mines burst all over our defenses, dousing the trenches with clods of earth and red wisps of smoke. Explosions raged for half an hour, plowing the ground, for half an hour we hid in "fox holes", and only observers in single cells, no, no, for a second or two went up and again crawled into their holes. But there were losses. Small, but they were.

After the mortar preparation, the Romanians again began to approach us. There were at least a battalion of them, they marched in several chains, capturing almost a kilometer along the front. Once again, having let the first chain to a close distance, the company opened heavy fire from machine guns and

machines. The wounded squealed heart-rendingly, crawled, rolled on the ground, and everyone whipped and whipped at them. Finally, the surviving Romanians turned back, leaving the wounded, weapons and packs behind. Few have gone. Hundreds of human lives were cut short on that unforgettable May morning on a small steppe island near Lozovenka.

By noon there was an uneasy calm. The smoke cleared. The sun was hot. Fortunately, in the old half-collapsed well it was possible to draw plenty of cold water. The wounded now and then asked for water. Our planes had left long ago, and it was clear that they would not come for us. We could not believe that we could hold out until dark, and at night break through the ring of Romanians and Germans..."

And so it happened: Nebolsin was among those few

233

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The Battle of Kharkov is over. Romanian units cross the Seversky Donets. Ahead is Stalingrad.

tens of thousands of Soviet servicemen who failed to break out of the ring ...

As for the Romanian troops, they lost 22% of all personnel participating in the battle near Kharkov (23% - near Odessa, 24% - in the Crimea, 17% - in the Caucasus and 50% - in the Don region and the Kalmyk steppes). ...

Romanians are chasing Soviet prisoners.

' Agtaa VotAp t a | doyeah ga2o! top a1. Ejiga Meyape. Visige5N, 1995. - 5.99.

14th TANK DIVISION

Short story. The 14th Panzer Division was formed on the basis of the 4th Infantry Division on August 15, 1940. In 1941, the division passed through Ukraine to Rostov, from where it was driven back to the Mius. After wintering, the 14th TD took part in the Battle of Kharkov, then, through the Kalmyk steppes, went to Stalingrad. Here, in January 1943, it ceased to exist.

Emblem of the 14th Panzer Division.

d 14. Mog Wood hog Wop

2d.6. - 12/22/1941:

s ---s „> s < be[spdepe 73133 7 } er! Mele Ropteg 603 no OKA FUR, bezsRome oNegAg! 914 ` \ \ t [109 [121% \ y 17-239. Paradise Meat th co 9 \ SNACKCOM! \ a for \ A ak - \ ov H tbankl U 26.9. y a / \ U26.-289 ® o] A |. | I'm talking about RAORETVOMZK 8 | I ye

Zarokozne

[3 8. . i 5: -310 KANO: AS oANOVONKA ® 261 o

CleansAEA

AND

The combat path of the 14th Panzer Division in 1941

235

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The 14th Panzer Division of the second formation went from east to west - Krivoy Rog, Cherkassy, Yassy. Then it was relocated to Courland, where it was broken up in 1945.

During the Battle of Kharkov, the division was commanded by General of Tank Forces Friedrich Kühn (Sepega | 4eg Rap-2etsgarrep Epedisv KaVp).

The 14th Panzer Division consisted of one tank regiment, one rifle brigade, a motorcycle rifle battalion, an artillery regiment, a reconnaissance battalion, an anti-tank battalion, an engineer battalion, a communications battalion, and rear units:

Rap7teg-Kegipepi 36

esNi(en-Vprgade 14

esNi(en-Kegitep: 103

espi(7ep-Keritep(108

Kgaassweep-VayaShop 64

AtsShepe Vezitep: 4

Ap agil25-AePipe 40

Rap7ecazeg-AMeopo 4

R1seg-VabaShop 13

MaspyasChep-ASHeLop? 4

Winzoggip?5 itirrep 4

The 36th tank regiment (two battalions, six companies) was formed in 1938 and took part in the Polish and Western campaigns (Warsaw, Belgium, Dunkirk, Burgundy, Dijon). The regiment participated in the Balkan campaign as part of the 14th Panzer Division. Shortly before the Kharkov battle, the 60th Tank Battalion was created on the basis of the 2nd Battalion of the 36th Regiment, and the new 2nd Battalion of the 36th Tank Regiment was created on May 1, 1942 on the basis of the 7th Tank Regiment.

At the same time, the reconnaissance battalion of the 14th TD was merged into its motorcycle rifle battalion.

236

Konstantin Bykov

The starting position of the 14th Panzer Division. At the end of November 1941, Mackensen's 3rd Panzer Corps!, which included the 14th Panzer Division, was driven out of Rostov and driven back across the Mius River, where it stood on the defensive until the end of January 1942. On January 28, 10 days after the beginning of the Soviet Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya operation, parts of the corps were thrown to the north to neutralize the Soviet breakthrough. The 14th Panzer Division was included in the Mackensen group, which, in addition to the 14th TD, included the 11th Army Corps (298th Infantry Division, 1st Romanian Infantry Division, 113th Infantry Division) and the 100th Light infantry division.

During these January-February hostilities, the 14th Panzer Division was scattered over the strike groups Hube and Zanne. The 60th tank battalion, created on the basis of the 14th TD, entered the Kollerman strike group. Having neutralized the breakthrough of the 5th cavalry corps of A.A. Grechko and

1st Cavalry Corps F.A. Parkhomenko, which included the 132nd and 15th brigade, the German troops reached the Samara River, where they entrenched themselves. Until May 17, Samara was the southern rear border of the Soviet Barvenkovsky bridgehead. Moreover, Barvenkovo is located only 20 km north of this river. The carelessness of the Soviet command and the inefficiency of Soviet intelligence, which, while preparing the May operation, did not take into account or overlooked the presence of a German tank division in their near "underbelly", are simply amazing! |

The author of the history of the 14th Panzer Division tells the following about the period preceding the May battle:

"From February 21 to May 15, 1942, the 64th motorcycle rifle battalion (Kgad5sv.VI.64) was in defensive positions in the Sofievka area. During March, the 40th reconnaissance battalion (R7.Ai. .40), being in the process of front shift with the 1903rd Rifle Regiment

| If officially, then the 3rd Army Motorized Corps.

2 All settlements indicated in this section are located in the region of Samara.

237

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

(Zspil.K 21.103), at first he was in Razdolie, then in Andreevka, north of Samara, then - again in Razdolie. During this time, I especially remember the night visits of Russian "sewing machines", which dropped up to 174 bombs per night.

Rumors about the connection of the 40th reconnaissance battalion with the 64th motorcycle rifle battalion intensified in early April 1942. The order for the 14th Panzer Division dated 24.4.42 sounded like this:

"1.) After the reorganization of the 40th reconnaissance battalion (R7.A.A.40), Major Grams (Grup\$!) receives the 64th motorcycle rifle battalion (K 64), Hauptmann Berndt (Bern4 G) receives the 2nd battalion of the 108th rifle regiment (P./b. V. 108).

2.) Headquarters R7.A.A.40 is abolished. The leadership of the divisional reserve is taken by Major Shperling (5regp?), Commander of the 4th anti-tank battalion (R7.Gag.ASh.4), with his headquarters, which for this should be redeployed to the Liman region.

In April-May 1942, K64 and R7.AtsyYA.AShShCH.40 were assembled in Sofiyivka to form a new 64th motorcycle rifle battalion. As can be seen from a later made commemorative coin, P7. ACHÿAYA. AI. 40 lasted from 08/15/1940 to 04/15/1942.

With the beginning of the snow melting and, at the same time, the period of thaw, the mobility of the troops decreased. The division was in its positions on both sides of Aleksandrovka. On the right was the 100th light infantry division (100.1sche Oum.), reinforced by a Croatian regiment, on the left, the 1st mountain division (1.Se.Pum.) was introduced. The enemy kept calm, carrying out quiet reconnaissance by sentinel groups. With our own enterprises, our units also constantly checked the position of the enemy. The troops worked to improve their positions and apartments, devoted time if allowed si-

| Statz Coy: Ge 14. Rap2er-Ogmyup 1940 - 1945. Wad Maineit. 1957. - b. 42.

238

Konstantin Bykov

tuition, advanced training of recruits, training of specialists, rest and renewal.

During April, the enemy, who had a large number of troops, withdrew several formations from the front.

The thaw period was overcome thanks to the measures taken in advance without significant difficulties. At the end of April, the condition of the roads again became tolerable, and the mobility of the troops improved markedly. The warmth corresponding to spring came in early May. At this time, preparations began for the implementation of a new task - the offensive, first planned for May 18, but then, due to events near Kharkov, postponed to May 17, 1942 "1.

14th Panzer Division in the May battles. On May 17, two groups of German troops, each of which included a tank division, attacked the Barvenkovo bridgehead from south to north. The group located to the east, from the 16th TD, advanced along the Slavyansk-Dolgenkaya-Izyum axis. The group to the west, the 3rd Tank Corps with the 14th Tank Division, advanced along the Andreevka-Barvenkovo-Kamyshevakh axis.

Unfortunately, the participation of the 14th Panzer Division in the Battle of Kharkov, despite the fact that it played one of the key roles here, is described by Rolf Grams very succinctly:

"The division, advancing on both sides of Andreevka through Zaparo-Maryevka, already on May 17 reached Sukhoi Torts and, at the same time, its first objective of the offensive." In the evening, the warheads were already on the northern coast. Despite the first very strong heat this year and impenetrable black dust, which were well known from last year, a breakthrough

| Stats Co./: Ge 14. Rapteg-Olmson 1940 - 1945. Wad MaiWeit. 1957. - 5. 43.

2 Barvenkovo is located on the Dry Butt River. Zaparo-Marievka is located in the middle of the road between Aleksandrovka and Barvenkovo. On May 17, in the Aleksandrovka area, there were (from west to east): the 351st Rifle Division of the 57th Army, the 341st Rifle Division and the 106th Rifle Division of the 9th Army.

239

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the enemy's main line of defense occurred in one throw. The planned surprise was completely successful. Further advances followed on 18 May.'

The division, with its light combat outposts (51st and 2nd KrAnep), moved northward and soon linked up with units of the 17th Army attacking from the east. By evening, the forces of the division thrown forward reached Grushevakh on the Berek, where they met with units of the 16th Panzer Division that had approached from the east. The suddenness of the actions helped create a bridgehead on the northern bank, from which it was possible to continue the offensive to the northwest. Soon the forward units of the 384th Infantry Division entered this bridgehead and formed a front to the east along the Donets.

On May 21, the division, after it had destroyed enemy tanks in Protopopovka and cleared this settlement, struck further to the north.

May 22 brought one of the decisive prerequisites for victory in this battle: the 14th Panzer Division, while covering its flank from the east, took Bayrak on the Donets and immediately after noon established contact with the 6th Army. However, the boiler south of Kharkov was closed! River submarine cable

| Stats Co[G; Pe 14. Rapgeg-Otmzyup 1940 - 1945. Wad Maipait. 1957. — 5. 43. The reader who is familiar with Mackensen's book will easily see that the descriptions of the same events by Grams and Mackensen coincide to the word. In fact, Grams is a "shortened" Mackensen, at least in the section on the Kharkov operation.

2 To the east, the 384th infantry division of the 16th TD was advancing. Encircled between them and the 14th TD was part of the troops of the 335th, 106th and 349th RDs of the 9th Army.

3 Grushevakh (and nearby Velikaya Kamyshevakh), located in the area where the Bereka flows into the Seversky Donets, was one of the key points of the forthcoming encirclement of Soviet troops. The 16th Panzer Division approached Grushevakh from the east after it had reached Izyum. Encircled between the two southern attacking German groups were parts of the 5th Cavalry Corps.

* The Germans, breaking into the Soviet rear, were themselves surrounded. Therefore, infantry divisions were immediately deployed on the flanks of the attacking tank divisions and occupied a dense defense, with fronts both to the east and to the west.

5 Protopopovka is located | 2 - 13 km north of Grushevakh.

240

Konstantin Bykov

communication was immediately established with units of the 44th Infantry stationed on the northern coast divisions.

Once again the division took part in the decisive place of the great battle. The pride and joy of command and troops were enormous.

Meanwhile, the enemy, squeezed in the cauldron by other divisions of the 3rd Panzer Corps (Sh.R? Donets in the Savintsev region - the only direction in which he still hoped for salvation and success! The situation was critical, because the wall of the boiler was very thin. Therefore, on May 25, the division was forced to fight off the front to the west from numerous attempts to break through the scattered, but rather significant enemy troops, which overflowed through the western front of the corps?. The struggle continued until May 28, until the complete destruction of the enemy forces in the cauldron.

The commander of the troops of the 1st Panzer Army, Colonel General von Kleist, issued an order in which he expressed special recognition to the troops of the 3rd Panzer Corps. The introduction of our commander, General of the Cavalry von Mackensen, to the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross was an additional sign of this recognition to the command and troops!

Back at the time when the battle was encircled south of

' This was the foothold of Moskalenko's 38th army. Its western front ran along the line (from north to south) from Shchurovka on the Donets to Chepel on the Donets. The Seversky Donets itself makes a sharp loop to the east between these settlements. Thus, this bridgehead was surrounded by water on all sides except the western one, and the transfer of troops to it from Savintsy and other places on the opposite bank of the river was extremely difficult.

On 2 May 25 and the following days, German troops (including the 14th division) located in the area between Chepel and Lozovenka were counterattacked by Soviet troops from the boiler (21st, 23rd TK and several brigade) from the Bolshoy land" (consolidated tank corps).

3 Sgatu Ko/: Ge 14. Rapteg-Om lon 1940-1945. Vaa Maivet. 1957. - 5. 44.

241

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Kharkov was in full swing, the first regroupings began to carry out a new combat order. On May 31, the division was replaced on its front by the 1st mountain division and by June 3 reached new concentration areas southwest of Chuguev on the left bank of the Donets. The enemy, with the exception of reconnaissance searches, which were suppressed, behaved calmly.

On June 7, a new offensive was to begin, but the Russian weather crossed out this plan. Heavy rains on June 6 so soaked the roads that the offensive had to be postponed. On June 10, the newly formed "von Mackensen group" went on the offensive...

| Statue Koi: Right there. — 5.45.

16th TANK DIVISION

Short story'. The 16th Panzer Division was formed in November 1940 on the basis of the 16th Infantry Division. The main stages of the military way: 1940 - Romania; 1941 - Balkans, Dubno, Zhytomyr, participation in the Uman encirclement, capture of Nikolaev, participation in the Kiev encirclement?, Mius Front; 1942 - Mius-front, Kharkov, Stalingrad; 1943 - death in the Stalingrad cauldron. Emblem 16th

16th tank division of the second formation = tank division in 1944-1945. participated in battles in the area of Cherkassy, Vinnitsa, Bobruisk, Vistula and Oder. Partly surrendered to the Soviet, part to the American troops. b |

In 1941, the 16th Panzer Division included: one tank regiment (about 140 tanks), one rifle brigade (consisting of two rifle regiments, two battalions per regiment), an artillery regiment, an anti-tank battalion, reconnaissance, motorcycle-rifle, sapper and communications battalions:

| Iemyep l'o]tape. CessysShche 4er 16. Rapneg-O1mxlyuop 1939-1945. Kategadepi'legk e.u. Whoolah Nap\$. Nepptre Rodtip. Wad Maivet. Vet, 1958.

2 Here the 16th TD, having struck north from the Kremenchug bridgehead, went to Romny, where it met with the 3rd TD advancing to the south of Novgorod-Seversky. Thus, the encirclement of the troops of the Southwestern Front was carried out. In Soviet literature, and often in German, it is reported that the ring was closed at Lokhvitsa and that it was closed by the 3rd and 9th TD. This does not match the facts.

243

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

. , *b her

Al: ar Raven nor you Kato t run Ma - ManeeNilo 1.12.41 - 5.4.42 t ". / ` - d

Ryme

Res Zemev min Osho gzezeE, krel ats: CORR B 445 \ ilega ti (tsiea TRD a'j Fet 1eeget Kamvegace ad Maasa eee ssuso Fe Myv \ Untsegie Pilasa Tsenel e Poshchuk. E) k. Tterre; Shli XXHAX Se Kogrv Shi YuU. Rameg .Kogui. gosma Sh Rg. .Kogrz 13 AZkGUE Vas Omega (K Llb Yom) Usgviraatole 4I Vogtagusrev Fit Vepeshcheno I totuye? regiz moisture 2Sh 29 Mish-mimegmeyIE .Avogars. No. ogZ! RElcept! - sKegye Mg bey Ale! her Sh! Ra, Kogrz 2sch Kobo® Sela de: es mu ue. mega Za tegbevomiya, vent esmesvi Ussette o yin a. : libes, Megeshsme Zstattregobe, trom il mesvet M nmeg Gy ve : Vieta 2459. ile AAP zlaevishchin, 'se guvmisve us * Mes Fen Eataalee! cot ball Atsesazkogii al Kaakiya.

ash she \ b: igne azgoeke che. fl "4 - G.;;

16th Panzer Division near Rostov and on the Mius Front. December 1941 - April 1942

- Rapteg-Keripege 2 (two battalions) - Espaep-Vprade 16 (Zspaep-Kegitepi 64 and Zspaeep

Keripepi 79) - ACShepe-Kezitepi 16 (three divisions) - Rapkhetsazeg-AMETzipe 16

AND),

"Ch r 1.3

m. \$6 pa9

Oh peri yego

The combat path of the 16th Panzer Division in 1941-1942.

244

Konstantin Bykov

– Ai Agip5-AePipo 16

– Rucheg-WaaShop 16

— KgadzVaep-WaaShop 16

- Maspyaschep-AYe! Popo 16

Some explanation, obviously, will require the term "rifle", with which we translated the term "es ihep". The Wehrmacht included infantry, infantry motorized and rifle units, which differed from each other in weapons, degree of motorization, etc.

The Red Army included rifle and motorized rifle units. The difference between them in structure and armament can already be seen from their name.

The difficulty in translating from German lies in the fact that the German infantry regiment ([sh{ashchepe Keritep?) was the equivalent of the Soviet rifle regiment (Esshikhep-Keritepo. However, the German rifle regiment was not equivalent to the Soviet rifle regiment, but to the Soviet motorized rifle regiment). shelf.

Previously, in order to avoid confusion in armament, motorization and purpose (Schutzen regiments were part of German tank divisions), in Soviet military literature, German rifle units were called motorized rifle units. However, this did not correspond to the German terminology. Therefore, in recent years there has been a transition to the use of the original German names of their combat units: German mountain units are now, like mustache Germans, called mountain units, and not mountain rifle or mountain infantry. German rifle regiments are now called rifle regiments, not motorized rifle regiments.

At first it may be unusual, but you need to remember that if the text refers to a German infantry unit that is fighting with a Soviet infantry unit, then it is actually not about an infantry-to-infantry battle, but about a battle German motorized infantry belonging to a tank division, with conventional Soviet infantry.

From the very beginning of the war and in the Battle of Kharkov, the 16th Panzer Division was commanded by a one-armed Major General

245

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Hans Valentin Hube. The division was part of the 1st Panzer Group (Army) of Ewald von Kleist of the Army Group "South" of Fedor von Bock (Eedog wop Vosk).

In 1914, in one of the battles, the platoon commander Lieutenant Hube (born 1890) lost his arm. In 1934, he was appointed commander of an experimental motorized battalion, and in 1935, commandant of the Olympic Village. For the battles in Ukraine in 1941 General May

Commander of the 16th Tank Corps Hube was awarded the Knight

Division Hans-Valentin Hube. the cross (strike near Staro-Konstantinov on July 7) and Oak leaves (the capture of Nikolaev and the Kiev cauldron). In January 1943, Hube refused to comply with the Fuhrer's order to take off by plane from the Stalingrad cauldron. He was taken from there by the SS from Hitler's personal guard. He died in 1944 in a plane crash. "Hube earned himself a reputation as a steadfast, fair, not devoid of common sense commander... The soldiers called him Man... Hitler called him one of the three greatest commanders, which: gave the Second World War...

The history of the 2nd Panzer Regiment of the 16th Panzer Division is somewhat older than its divisions. The regiment was formed in 1935 and provided the first military and political actions of Hitler: the annexation of Austria and the Czech Republic. Participation in the Polish campaign, the 2nd Tank Regiment entered the Second World War. In 1940 he took part in battles against the French and the British. Here, in France, the first pure dance took place.

Mitcham S., Muller J. Commanders of the "Third Reich". / Per. from English/. - Smolensk: Rusich, 1995. - P. 166.

246

Konstantin Bykov

kovy battle of the 2nd tank regiment. Here, his own headquarters was almost completely destroyed by a raid of his own "Stukas" ...

On the eve of the campaign against the Soviet Union, the 2nd regiment consisted of 2 companies of medium and 4 companies of light tanks. In total, the regiment had 45 R-P tanks, 23 R-Shs tanks with 37-mm guns, 48 R-Shs tanks with 50-mm guns, 20 R-[U] tanks and 10 armored command vehicles.

During the respite, which the regiment received after the capture of the commander of the 2nd tank Nikolaev and before the encirclement of the regiment, Rudolf Sikenius. troops of the South-Western Front, the combat capabilities of the regiment were increased by including new cumulative projectiles in the ammunition for the short-barreled guns of the P-[U] tanks. These shells made it possible to penetrate the armor of Soviet tanks from a distance of 800 meters. The organizational improvement of the regiment was the reduction of all R-P tanks into two companies.

The commander of the 2nd Tank Regiment during the Battle of Kharkov was Oberst Lieutenant Rudolf Sikenius (KodoR ueskKepi\$). After the First World War, whom he knew as an infantry lieutenant, Zickenius got a job in the police. In 1938, he resumed military service, immediately starting with a tank reconnaissance battalion. In the second half of the war (1943-1945), Ziekenius commanded the 16th Panzer and 263rd Infantry Divisions, rose to the rank of Major General and was killed at the end of April 1945.

The medium tank battalion in the 2nd Panzer Regiment of the 16th Panzer Division was commanded by Count Hyacinth Strachwitz (StaGNuash Znasw7). However, Graf, mentioned in the history of the battles of the 16th TD in the Battle of Kharkov, could be both Strachwitz and Schimmelfenig, who also served in the 16th Panzer Division.

247

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

16th Panzer Division on the eve of the Battle of Kharkov. At the beginning of 1942, the division kept watch on the Mius Front!, replenishing the equipment knocked out in previous battles. During the January Barvenkovo-Lozovsky offensive operation of the Soviet troops, the 16th TD entered the reserve of Army Group South. However, some of its units, like the commander of the Hube division himself, were used in battles as part of the 3rd Army Motorized Corps of General Mackensen and the 44th AK, commanded by General Shtapf (Sepega) 4er Prashepe ONo Zar, ac 01/26/1942 - General Angelis (Sepega | 4er ApShepe Mahipap 4e Apee \$).

When on January 16, units of the 3rd AK (mot.) changed the 16th TD on the Mius, was the latter temporarily subordinated to Mackensen ?. Reasonable subordination. If the enemy strikes during the change of units at the front, this is already bad. And if the replacement units are subordinate to different commanders, then this is a real disaster. On January 18, during the shift period, the Soviet troops really struck. However, much to the north - in the Izyum region. Mackensen was thrown to neutralize the strike, who took with him "Papa Hube", ordering him to command a strike group composed of parts of the 14th Panzer and 100th Light Infantry Divisions.

The source for the story about the actions of the 16th Panzer Division in the Battle of Kharkov was for us: the book by Wolfgang Werten "History of the 16th Panzer Division. 1939-1945, which was published in West Berlin by the Council of Veterans of the 16th Panzer and 16th Infantry Divisions.

"During the first days of the new year, the situation remained calm," says the history of the 16th Panzer Division. - The search group as part of a platoon tried on Jan 10

Mius-front - the front line from Taganrog to the north along the Mius River, where the Germans entrenched themselves after they were driven out of Rostov.

From the Bug to the Caucasus: Per. with him. - M.: AST Publishing House LLC: Tranzitkniga LLC, 2004.
Contents: [X Army Corps in the Eastern Campaign of 1941 / G. Geyer. From the Bug to the Caucasus: III Panzer Corps in the campaign against Soviet Russia in 1941-1942 / E. von Mackensen. P. 284. Ibid., about the action of the Hube shock group. pp. 284 - 294.

248

Konstantin Bykov

cooking to pass: through the Russian positions, but was discovered and cut off ahead of time. Only on the night of January 13 "Operation Bitenbek"! succeeded. The prisoners were taken. Frost from 15 degrees and heavy snow made it difficult to dig trenches.

Finally, on January 14, the replacement of the 64th and 79th infantry regiments by the 319th and 320th infantry regiments began. Like a spark in a pile of straw, a good mood jumped into the trenches! Since June 22, the division has been in continuous use, and now it is time for rest, extermination of lice, sleep and warmth. The cold made any rapid movement impossible. The regiments moved slowly to the Yekaterinovka area, 40 km behind the front line. At parting, the Russians showed us their nose. Their planes escorted the shift with bombs, but without causing any damage.

Pride filled the hearts of the soldiers of the 16th R7.R\.., when on January 17, 1942 their "papa Hube", the fourth of the division commanders and the 62nd of the Wehrmacht soldiers, received the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross. Oberst Hofer (NOEG) received the German Cross in Gold.

However, on January 20, an order was received to stop the shift and to assign already replaced units to positions 100.1e.G.O. (100th Light Infantry Division) north of Stalino... The division was torn apart. With a hurricane snowy wind that rushed from the white desert, at 30 - 35 degrees below zero, I had to move forward again and again. Vehicle wheels are already frozen

after a short stop, the observation slots were covered with ice. The command of the 64th regiment for 8 hours of movement and with a three-time change of ma-

' The word "bitenbek" can be translated as "invitation of the baker." Perhaps we are talking about an operation to capture food carriers on the front line.

2 It couldn't be. Obviously, the Germans made a mistake, in fact they were replaced by the 419th and 420th regiments of the 125th infantry division, which also corresponds to Mackensen's data (p. 284) about the replacement of units of the 16th TD by units of the 125th Infantry Division.

249

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Shin finally reached his new command post near Zimovniki. The enemy, fortunately, remained calm.

On January 27, an artillery thunderstorm was heard in the north, which slowly moved to the west. Did the Russians break through from Izyum to Kharkov? This then creates the danger that the southern front will be cut off. In the trenches, in the outposts and wagon trains, alarming questions arose.

In the 16th R7.O\u. an alarm was declared.

All units of the division ready for departure rolled 100 km north to the area northeast of Khartsizsk. The Russians broke the Italian front! Snow swirled over the roads, the temperature was minus 20 degrees.

First, until January 18, parts 16.R7.PUu. remained in the Warmey reserve in Alekseev-Orlovka.

During reconnaissance in mid-January, the commander of the brigade Oberst Wagner (U \ aereg) was seriously wounded!. Major von Witzleben (UMeBen) took command of the battle group.

Unexpectedly, she was thrown to Makeevka and subordinated to the army corps of Oberst General Goth (No1) -. The Russians made their way between Slavyansk and Balakleya to Izyum. The leadership did not have any accurate picture of the position of the enemy. Battle around Nikiforovka?. It was stubbornly carried on for three days at 30-40 degrees below zero. But take

! Paul Wagner (Obegs[Raz] Umagpeg) was wounded on January 11. Oberst Hans Adolf Arenstorf (Napz Adojoop Agepyu) took command of the 16th Rifle Brigade and commanded until November 1942.

From 11/25/1941 to 04/20/1942, Oberst General German Goth (Negtapp No) commanded the 17th Army, which included the 44th, 4th and 52nd AK. Obviously, in one of them, with the beginning of the Soviet Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya operation, BG Witzleben entered.

3 Nikiforovka is located 22-25 km southeast of Slavyansk. The Nikiforovka area (the area of the Kramatorsk-Artemovskaya group of Germans) was in the zone of the 37th Army of A.I. Lopatin. At the end of January, when at the junction between 57A D.I. Ryabyshev and 37A was introduced by F.M. Kharitonov, the latter struck south, towards 37A. Everything ended unsuccessfully, it was not possible to liquidate the knot of German resistance in the Slavyansk region. In May, this node will serve as a base for the German offensive on the Barvenkovsky salient.

250

Konstantin Bykov

this locality failed. Only after a new offensive, after a 48-hour hot struggle and associated with heavy losses, did Nikiforovka submit. About 500 dead Russians

remained lying in the trenches, on the roads and in buildings. A futile counterattack cost the Russians another 300 men, and the battle group commander received the Knight's Cross.

Finally, on April 27, 1942, the battle group 16.R7.O /! M. received an order to return to her divisions.

Only the 5th company of the tank regiment remained in the Uspenskaya area as a quick reserve.

Fortunately, the worst has been avoided in the north. However, things were still going badly for the Army Group "South" - the Russians, trying to break through to the Dnieper, captured the area, concave into the German front 100 km deep and 80 km wide.

The division was prepared to withdraw from the Mius Front 300 km to the west, to a line along the Dnieper. The soldiers were hardly organized to build sledges and prepare property for destruction. The Russians, through loudspeakers, offered to go over to their side; The combat guard listened with gratitude to the invitation music and used the discarded passes for important purposes. The troops of the front line of defense with great zeal built a second line in order to guarantee the protection of the 15-kilometer front of the division. The harassing fire of the Russians was rich in unexploded shells. The frost slowly weakened, a thaw set in, and finally the first parcels with winter clothes began to arrive - an action of donations from the Motherland.

In early March, reports of an upcoming enemy offensive became more frequent. Prisoners of the hitherto unmarked naval brigades and guards division?

' This refers to the Barvenkovsky ledge, formed as a result of an unsuccessful attempt to liberate Kharkov and reach the Dnieper.

2 Obviously, we are talking about units of the 3rd Guards Rifle Corps from the 56A on the Mius Front: the 2nd Guards Rifle Division, the 76th, 81st and 65th Guards Rifle Brigade, as well as the 63rd Tank Brigade.

251

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

there were rumors about the planned breakthrough to Taganrog. Our patrol in the Mius area, east of Shaposhnikov, was again detected by the vigilant posts of the 31st Russian Infantry Division. Artillery of the 16th R7.GUu. covered Matveyev Kurgan with destructive fire. But the enemy was constantly intensifying, especially in the Ryazhenaya area; our reconnaissance group brought prisoners from the forest area between the river and Starorotovka!, who claimed to know about the upcoming massive offensive of the Russian 56th and 9th armies.

On March 26, the ice cover on the Mius broke up, the thaw led to a rise in the water level within 4 days from 48 cm to 3.60 m. th battalion of the 64th regiment) was under the WATER.

The enemy experienced the same. He removed his glanders and only on April 2 returned to his front line. Thanks to the flooding of the Mius, the division received calm Easter holidays. Nevertheless, greetings from the motherland and small delicacies to the often monotonous food supply arrived very poorly. The supply routes turned into a swamp, and even the horses plunged up to their stomachs in this mud and stopped. The only consolation was persistent rumors about the imminent movement of the division. In April, all units returned to the division from other fronts. Meanwhile, the tank regiment received R7.Sh tanks (with a 5 cm gun) and new R7.GU tanks with a 7.5 cm gun. All this accumulated in Makiivka"?

' Forest northwest of Matveev Kurgan, between Mius and Starorotovka.

In January, the 9th Army was transferred from the southern to the northern wing of the Southern Front and took part in the Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya operation.

3 Imyep Sho[tagg. SezshashShe aet 16. Rap2er-O! \ 1 \$ 1op 1939 - 1945. - 5. 80 - 82. Filed by the "Front Illustration" (Galushko A., Kolomiets M. Battles for Kharkov in May 1942. - 2000. - No. 6), the 16th Panzer Division by the beginning of the Kharkov battle had 97 tanks (29 R2Krehk P, 46 ReKrem Sh, 22 R2Krem GU).

252

Konstantin Bykov

Preparation for the operation. In the spring of 1942, both opposing forces were preparing for the upcoming battles. For us, this was preparation for the next, already the third this year, major offensive in order to liberate Kharkov and reach the Dnieper. For the Germans, this was preparation for a series of private operations to improve their position in the south. The goal of this series was to reach favorable initial lines for the decisive outcome of the war, the offensive on the Volga and the Caucasus.

On May 12, the Soviet offensive began from the Barvenkovsky ledge in the direction of Kharkov. On May 18, the Germans were supposed to launch Operation Friederikus-1 - to strike at the root of the Barvenkovsky ledge from the north (Balakleya) and from the south (Slavyansk). Thus, they were supposed to surround and destroy the Soviet troops located on the ledge. The 16th Panzer Division was one of those formations that were supposed to hit the Barvenkovsky ledge from the south. This strike was planned to be carried out from two directions:

- from the Aleksandrovka region (west of Slavyansk) to Barvenkovo and further to Izyum, the 3rd AK (mot.) Mackensen was to advance;

- from the region of Kramatorsk and Slavyansk itself, the 44th (from the 16th TD) and 52nd army corps were to attack Izyum.

The Barvenkovsky ledge from the south was covered by the 9th army of F.M. Kharitonov from the Southern Front R.Ya. Malinovsky.

"On April 24, 1942, the change of the Nordland regiment of the SS Viking division began (. In tiresome marches full of obstacles, the division moved to the Stalino area, and its regiments were stationed in Chaikino, Makeevka and nearby villages," reports on preparations for the operation "Friederikus-1" Wolfgang Werten - The winter passed in a heavy struggle in the north and in the center of the Eastern Front, where formations are

'
We are talking about the replacement of units of the 16th TD on the Mius Front with units of the international SS division "Viking" (sector of the 31st SD of the 56th Army).

253

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

suffered bitter losses in territory, people and materials. The South got away with it relatively easily. Now we had to equip ourselves for new ventures.

Coal mines are now the new picture of the landscape; sharp tops of waste heaps and powerful constructions of metallurgical plants towered in the bright Ukrainian sky in spring.

Next to the clumsy administrative quarters and party buildings, which, with their clumsy and boastful facades, were randomly scattered around the territory, stood the huts and barracks of the poor people. These people, mostly blond and blue-eyed, were

benevolent and restrained. They were starving, as their army took out or destroyed all stocks and warehouses.

In the usual way, the units were housed in administrative buildings similar to barracks. After days of calm, strict service began again. The replenishment was prepared unsatisfactorily. Only the most severe exercises could equip him for the upcoming vbay introduction. Beginners had to learn from the "shot hares" in such a way as to replace reckless courage with combat prudence and cunning. A reserve field battalion appeared. There was a quiet hour, there was time for letters, thoughts about home and conversations with a friend. However, vacation hopes were shattered. It had already been announced that units of the division were to prepare by mid-May for encirclement operations northeast of Stalino.

General Hube proclaimed in the Chaikino area: "The road to mother, bride, wife and child goes only through the East."

The goal was difficult, there were few forces, time flew by quickly, and no respite was foreseen for the troops.

If Russia was not defeated in 1941, then in 1942 it was bound to be defeated, because in 1943 America and England would be fully prepared, and a war on two fronts would become inevitable.

However, for an offensive along the entire 3000-kilometer

254

Konstantin Bykov

the length of the Eastern Front no longer had forces. Therefore, Hitler decided to defeat the Red Army in the southern sector, take away the industrial regions and the oil of the Caucasus, and, possibly, link up in Persia with the Afrika Korps that had made its way there through the Suez. And then - to take Moscow with a blow from the south and east! On April 15, 1942, he announced on the radio that the destruction of the Red Army was scheduled for this summer.

An obstacle to this plan was the concavity of the front to the east towards Kharkov, which the Russians had broken through during their winter offensive to the Dnieper. Correction of this situation has been planned. When the German offensive began in the Crimea on May 8, the Russians launched an offensive on May 12 from this salient of theirs with the aim of encircling Kharkov and achieving an operational breakthrough. The German leadership reacted with lightning speed to the actions of the enemy.

May 13 in the operational department of the headquarters of the 16th R7.PUx. there was a discussion of the plans of the command. The protrusion of the Russian front, which they were just at that time increasing, had to be cut off by a blow from the north and south before the Russians reached Kharkov. A strong attack group was to be assembled near Slavyansk, which was to advance to the northwest, having an eastern flank on the Donets, in order to stop the Russian withdrawal across the river.

As early as May 14, the 16th Panzer Division, to camouflage the company, rolled through Stalino-Yasinovataya-Artemovsk to its new area. At noon on May 15, maintaining an average 40-kilometer pace on a good highway, the warheads reached Konstantinovka, Druzhkovka, and Kramatorskaya.

Warm nights followed hot days. Fruit trees bloomed in the gardens of Slavyansk, where the tanks were hidden. The soldiers of the 384th Infantry Division, under the command of Baron von Gablenz (EreSheggi u. Caen7), who for many weeks held the old winter positions that were threatened here, were overly surprised at the new units that had gathered for 2 days in such a

255

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

previously lonely Slavyansk!. The city has turned into an anthill. Strange as it may seem, the very energetic Russian artillery has been silent so far. It is obvious that the enemy has not noticed anything yet.

Meanwhile, Timoshenko, with his 10 rifle divisions, 4 cavalry divisions, and 10 tank brigades, was striking from a salient front further west. At the same time, he moved to Kharkov from the northeast, from Volchansk and Belgorod, a huge grouping of troops, consisting of 18 rifle divisions, 2 cavalry divisions and 10 tank brigades, with the aim of pinching the Germans according to their own model of warfare. The enemy achieved a deep 65-kilometer penetration through the German winter positions and, having rolled over parts of the divisions occupying defensive positions, was already 180 kilometers west of the starting areas near Slavyansk.

However, the 44th Army Corps with the "Hube group" (16.R7.0lm. with its subordinate 97.1e.Rm.), the 384th and 68th infantry divisions were already equipping themselves to strike at the rear of the victorious enemy . As part of the 17th Army, the corps had a combat order to strike to the north and break through the enemy defenses from the chain of lakes near Slavyansk and Cherkasskaya. Was the 335th defending here? and the 51st Russian rifle divisions. Then the 44th Corps was to turn to the west and close the southern part of the boiler near Izyum. The 16th Panzer Division split into three battle groups for the offensive: von Witzleben (\\12- lebep), Zickenius (MlesKeplaz) and Krumpen (Kgatrep).

In anxious haste, the last preparations were made. Food carriers told their fellow

| Obviously, this is not entirely true. The 384th Infantry Division was formed in early 1942 and, having arrived on the Eastern Front in March, was engaged in studies, not defense.

2 There were only two regiments of the 335th Rifle Division. To the east of the 335th SD was the 51st SD, which was part of a grouping of the 51st SD, two regiments of the 335th SD and one battalion of the 78th Rifle Brigade. This group was reinforced by the 121st and 15th tank brigades and two cavalry divisions of the 5th cavalry corps. Behind this grouping was the 12th brigade of the front reserve.

256

Konstantin Bykov

old winter positions about events in their rear. All was quiet ahead, only the typical Russian harassing fire had grown a little stronger. Batteries took up new firing positions, ammunition piled up next to the guns. The tanks were refueling, receiving ammunition, the telephones were buzzing continuously... Timoshenko was already 200 km west of Slavyansk! The night of May 17 passed in great tension. It was Mother's Day."

May 17th. The first day of the offensive of the 16th TD. "At 03.05, German artillery began to work. Bomber squadrons, Stukas and fighters flew over the areas of concentration of troops in an unprecedented strength until now," Wolfgang Werten continues his story about the actions of the 16th TD. "With unheard of enthusiasm, the infantry broke through the completely equipped and deeply echeloned Russian winter positions and took a forest area 5 km north of Bylbasovka."

The opinion of the chief of staff of the South-Western direction, General I.Kh. Bagramyan regarding the positions in depth in this area and the defense of the 9th Army in general does not correspond to the German evidence:

"In accordance with the operational directive of the commander of the front (Southern. - Auth.) dated April 6, the 9th Army had seven rifle divisions and one rifle brigade. One of these rifle divisions, without the knowledge of the commander-in-chief of the troops of the direction, by the decision of the front commander, General R. Ya. Malinovsky, was transferred at the end of April to reinforce the Voroshilov-grad direction ...

Despite the demands of General R. Ya. Malinovsky to the commanders of armies and division commanders - to create a fully developed defensive zone in all respects - it actually represented a system of strongholds and centers of resistance, insufficiently equipped in terms of engineering. The total depth of

| Iemep Jo/gape. Cessshsche 4er 16. Rapteg-Ot\ \$1op 1939 - 1945. - 5.82 - 84.

9 - The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 257

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

ZeMasy Beg SRagCom

roch F°.. tt V | shchi

[7^{*}

No. A Ga —== <-- yy

The actions of the strike group Hube in the Kharkov battle.

rony did not exceed 3 - 4 kilometers, anti-tank defense was especially poorly organized.

"Then," V. Verten continues, "from the center of Bylbasovka? CS (battle group) Zickenius went to the north-west - on the right, close behind it - CS Krumpfen. At the same time, to their left, from the northwestern part of Bylbasovka, von Witzleben's KO came out with the MTU-VI assigned to it. ? Muesa (Mchez). They attacked to the north and covered the southwestern flank.

Bagramyan I.Kh. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1977. - S. 107, 111.? Bylbasovka is actually the western outskirts of Slavyansk.

3 MT \ - Mappzsvay < Napzrop \ aRep - transport vehicle. Possibly MTU-VI. - this is the 16th rifle battalion (armored) - Espiep-Vaashop 16 (ger.), which was part of the 16th tank division.

258

Konstantin Bykov

VO9. The 15th von Witzleben battle group overtook the infantry on the heights west of Nikolsky and the chain of lakes and, having come under fire from the village, made their way through the narrowest point through the forest northeast of Vysokoye. Here, in equipped field positions, an enemy battalion fought fiercely (the 51st Rifle Division or the 333rd Rifle Division - Auth.). The soldiers had to leave the armored personnel carriers and overcome the Russians in close combat. In a hard advance towards noon, they finally won the northern edge of the forest and completed the day's task - they took Krasnopolye!, located halfway to Izyum. On the territory of heights southeast of Dolgenkaya? The soldiers took up defensive positions facing north. Krumpfen's battle group dug in on the left with a westward front against Dubrovka and Novoselovka.

Zickenius' battle group also achieved its offensive objectives and, linking up with Krumpfen's CS, provided protection from the southwest of the Vysoky-Solyony line from the enemy located in a gully to the east of Kurulka | - Y.

At first, the Russians were completely stunned. Only in the afternoon did they manage to throw local reserves to the place of the breakthrough. Thick brown crowds of regimental strength attacked the heights from the lowland near Dubrovka (obviously, we are talking about the village of Dibrovnoye, located

between Dolgenka and Kurulka. - Auth.). Shells from ambushed tanks, light and heavy infantry guns?, flurry

To the northeast of Krasnopolye at that moment were: an army supply station, a field army base headquarters, field army depots, motor transport units, workshops, a bakery, a hospital base and many other rear units of the 9th Army.

2 In Dolgenkaya there was a forward command post and a communications center of the 9th Army of the Southern Front. Communication was also maintained through this node with the 57th Army. Thus, in the very first hours of the German offensive, the Soviet command lost control of two armies at once. And the armies, especially the 9th, lost contact with their formations.

3 Light - 75 mm, heavy - 150 mm.

259

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

heavy fire! machine guns - hit the attackers, and the counterattack was repulsed. In the evening, the planned shift of the 204th and 207th infantry regiments began (both regiments from the 97th leis {e shashchepe Pum1ch1yuop. - Auth.) "-.

Opposite the front lined up to the west by the battle groups of the 16th Panzer Division were, according to the atlas of D. Glantsaz, the 12th Tank Brigade, the 34th and 60th Cavalry Divisions of the 5th Corps and thrown back here from the Samara River 106 I Rifle Division. It is possible that units of the 335th Rifle Division encircled in Samara were also located in this area. According to Baghramyan, "units of the 5th cavalry corps, on their own initiative, moved into battle and with daring counterattacks stopped the Nazi troops that were striking from the Dolgenkaya area." It is possible that units of the 106th and 335th Rifle Divisions took part in the Soviet infantry counterattack mentioned by the Germans.

To the east of the combat groups of the 16th TD were the 30th cd, 121st and 15th battalions, as well as the 51st and 333rd sd thrown back here, which were opposed by the 101st IpdI providing the 16th TD from the east 257th Infantry Division, which was later joined by the 97th Infantry Division.

The results of the first day of the German offensive looked like this on this sector of the front:

- by 8 o'clock in the morning, the defense of the 9th army was broken through in the Slavic direction (where the 44th AK and 16th TD operated) - 4 - 6 km, on Barvenkovsky (Mackenzen's building) - nab - 10 km;

- immediately, with the start of the German offensive, the command and control of the troops of the 9th Army was destroyed - aviation destroyed its auxiliary command post and communications center in Dolgenkaya. At the same time, many staff officers died, and on-

'

Heavy and light machine guns are classified as easel and light machine guns.

? Iemyep l'o[tape. bezsshsshe 4er 16. Rap2er-PO! \ op 1939 - 1945. - 5.84 - 85.

3 Sape Rama M. ANaz apa igueu. Tpe Zo\le{ QuagKow OYepyaue, 12-29 Mau, 1942 (Rama Slat2 Prodisk, 1998).

260

Konstantin Bykov

Chief of Staff of the 9th Army, Major General F.K. Korzhenevich was wounded;

- The 9th Army lost contact not only with its troops, but also with the headquarters of the Southern Front. The commander of the 9A troops, General F.M. Kharitonov (on whom all the "dogs" would later be hanged), together with his headquarters, first relocated to Kamenka - to the main army command post. But Kamenka, located > - 7 km south of Izyum, was in the direction of the German strike, and the headquarters moved to Peski - on the left bank of the Seversky Donets. (Bagramyan accuses Kharitonov that "this redeployment was not coordinated with the commander of the Southern Front, R.Ya. Malinovsky." But how, in such a situation, without having a connection, could this be agreed upon?);

- since the Southern Front "knew nothing" about the events in the sector of the 9th Army, then the command of the South-Western direction "knew nothing" about the German breakthrough. "But everything that happened then in the zone of operations of the Southern Front became known to the headquarters of the South-Western direction much later," Bagramyan recalled. - It is very regrettable, but we learned about the powerful enemy strike on the southern front of the Barvenkovo ledge only on the evening of May 17th. The command of the Southern Front, having lost contact with subordinate troops, more or less figured out the situation and reported it to the commander-in-chief only by the end of the day.

By this time, with his tank fist, Kleist not only completed the breakthrough of our tactical defense, but also achieved operational successes.

In one of the first orders, signed by Bagramyan and handed over to the headquarters of the Southern Front at 16.00 on May 17, in the part that relates to the 16th TD, it was ordered:

"1. Transfer the 2nd cavalry corps (38, 62, 70 cd) to the operational subordination of the commander of the Law Firm ...

3. The defeat of the enemy group advancing from the Slavyansk region against the left flank of the 9th Army, to organize with the forces of 5 kk, 12 and 12] tbri 333 sd (without one sp) ...

! Bagramyan I.Kh. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing, 1977. - S. 113 - 114.

261

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

5. The reserve of the commander-in-chief - the 343rd rifle division, the PTR battalion and the 92nd reconnaissance brigade, by order of the Southwestern Front, concentrate in the Izyum region, prepare and occupy the line for a strong defense: Semenovka, Mal. Kamyshevka, Dry Kamenka, Sinicheno. Divisions to be ready to launch counterattacks in the directions of Barvenkovo and Slavyansk: 343rd Rifle Division with attached reinforcements with access to the Izyum area to be subordinated to the commander of the YuF. Use - with the permission of the commander-in-chief.

6. Commander of the Law Firm to take measures to prevent the spread of the enemy to the northern[northern] bank of the river Seversky| Donets at the junction between 78 sbr and 51 sd.

7. Reinforce the actions of the strike groups of the 9th Army with two regiments of the GMCH ... "".

An hour and a half after this order, a report was sent to Headquarters:

"... In order to repel the enemy offensive and its subsequent defeat, in addition to the measures set out in our combat order No. 0140 / OP, we allocated to strengthen the right wing of the Southern Front from the tanks arriving at our disposal: 23 units, 80 tanks in total..."2.

As you can see, considerable forces were used to neutralize the breakthrough: tank brigades?, cavalry corps AND REGIMENTS of Katyushas, rifle divisions and anti-tank battalions. The reserves of the direction, the reserves of the fronts and their armies were thrown into battle. Contrary to the accusations against Tymoshenko that he, they say, did not immediately stop the attack on Kharkov, we see that everything was not quite so. The attack on Kharkov by the northern strike force was suspended

Combat order of the headquarters of the South-Western direction No. 0140 / OP to the commander of the Southern Front on measures to repel the enemy offensive, undertaken by him in the sector of the 9th Army. 17.05. 16.00.

2 Report of the High Command of the South-Western Direction to the Headquarters of the Supreme Command about the enemy going on the offensive against the 9th Army of the Southern Front and measures to strengthen the right wing of this front. May 17, 1942. 17.30.

3 On the night of May 18, it was ordered to withdraw from the battle and throw the 23rd Panzer Corps towards the German breakthrough.

262

Konstantin Bykov

Leno, and from the southern group it was ordered to seize and send two tank corps to the breakthrough. However, forces and time (for their concentration) are, alas, different categories...

May 18 Capture of the southern part of Izyum. The turn of the 16th Panzer Division to the west. "After a good night, at dawn on May 18, the battle groups left their positions," says V. Verten. - The von Witzleben battle group again set out at the head of the division, having a combat order - to take the heights south of Izyum and block, at the same time, the Donets defile near Donetsk. With a sudden blow and in a quick subsequent battle, the battle group took Kamenka and field positions at Hill 185.1. At the same time, Lieutenant Koch (Kosp) and Lieutenant (Keyeg), who were walking ahead of their platoons, were killed. The movement to the north continued.

After arriving at the position of heavy weapons, a tank company and motorcyclists took Donetsk, while capturing several hundred prisoners and rich booty. Was the last way back for the enemy to Izyum blocked?. At about 12.30 pm Zickenius' CS arrived here and, after a short concentration in the initial position, began an assault on the dominant height 200. The enemy was fleeing from field fortifications, anti-tank ditches and concrete bunkers. Albeit with difficulties, the 16th Panzer Division captured the city of Izyum?, a large forest area in the northwest and the Donets loop. A platoon of the 3rd engineer company entered Izyum; The Russians gave him a job by destroying the bridges across the Donets.

The Seversky Donets flows from west to east south of Izyum. However, near the village of Donetskoie, the river turns sharply to the north, into Izyum itself, and then, just as sharply, turns to the south. The city of Izyum is located both to the north and inside this loop.

* This refers to the road leading to Izyum from the west - from the Barvenkovsky ledge.

3 Sent to protect Izyum 343rd Rifle Division Major General Yu.A. Naumenko (1151st, 1153rd and 1155th joint ventures) and the 92nd detachment came here after the city was taken by the Germans. Obviously, on May 18, Izyum was defended by units of the 5th Cavalry Corps of General I.A. Pliev and the 51st division, Lieutenant Colonel B.K. Aliyev. On May 22, Izyum was liberated by the 343rd Rifle Division.

263

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Timoshenko listened with horror to the news of the German strike in his rear. He immediately stopped the offensive to the west, turned his troops around and hurried back to the east in forced marches to avoid encirclement. But so far, Gimoshenko's troops have not reached the Donets.

At 1530, the division issued a new battle order to the Zickenius and Krumpfen combat groups: to advance west along the Donets towards Velikaya Kamyshevakh - inside the pocket formed, towards the retreating Russians. By nightfall, the indicated goals were achieved, and a bridgehead was captured on the western bank of the Bereka. Vota's battalion (VI. \U/ota, [79) received a special

the order is to destroy all bridges and their guards 25 km to the north, where an enemy crossing was possible.

To appreciate the essence of this order, you need to imagine a map of the combat area.

To the north of Velikaya Kamyshevakh, along the western bank of the Seversky Donets, lined up, from south to north, the villages of Petrovskoye, Protopopovka and, further, Chepel. To the east, from these villages occupied by Soviet troops, beyond the Donets, was the "Greater Land". The village of Lozovenka is located 20 km west of the named villages. In a few days, when this 20-km space is filled with Germans, from Lozovenka, which will become the extreme eastern point of the Kharkov cauldron, towards the "Greater Land" - Petrovsky, Protopopovka and Chepel - the surrounded Soviet troops. The destruction of crossings on the Seversky Donets in the area of Petrovskaya and Protopopovka does not make it possible to concentrate a sufficient number of deblocking troops here. At the same time, the destruction of these crossings leads to the fact that the troops that have escaped from the encirclement crowd on the banks of the Donets and are destroyed by German aircraft.

Y'etyep Joapv. Sezshste 4er 16. Rapheger-O1y11yun 1939 - 1945. - 5. 85.

264

Konstantin Bykov

May 19. Between Izyum and Velyka Kamyshevakh. "After a good night, at 04:30 on May 19, Russian pilots attacked the western part of Kamyshevakh and the bridge over the Bereka," continues Wolfgang Werten. - In the morning, the von Witzleben battle group left their positions at Kamenka and began to march west. Engaged in combat with the enemy, who was advancing from south to north, the group slowly moved forward. At the same time, these same Russian units attacked Vota's Sonderkommando (to the east of Kamyshevakh). However, they hit the tongs of Vota and the approaching Witzleben and were destroyed. More than 1,000 prisoners were taken during the capture of height 184.2, the settlements of Petropolye, Andreevka, etc. In vain did the enemy try to deceive with the help of a protective gray color of equipment, weapons and shouts in German. Only small parts of it were able to swim away through the Donets-. Over 3000 prisoners!

Meanwhile, the 14th Panzer Division, which was located west of the 16th R7.Pu., also reached Bereka and formed a bridgehead near Petrovskaya?. From the west, the 384th Infantry Division was approaching the city (Izyum. — Auth.). Nevertheless, the situation in the south (from Izyum. - Auth.) remained critical; here 97.[e.G.O. (97th Light Infantry Division)"".

The main event of the day on May 19 was for us combat

' These could be the remnants of formations retreating from Samara and Barvenkovo, and parts of the 5th Cavalry Corps: 106th Rifle Division, 341st Rifle Division, 333rd Rifle Division, 34th Cavalry Division.

2 Petropolie and Andreevka are located 4-5 km south of the Seversky Donets, in the middle of the way from Kamenka to Velikaya Kamyshevakh.

3 That is, the 14th TD began "entering" into the space between Lozovenka in the west and the "Great Land" (Petrovskoye – Protopopovka – Chepel) in the east.

* Emmyep l'o[2ane. SezshsShe 4er 16. Rap2er-P!m op 1939 - 1945. - 5. 85. After the withdrawal of the 16th TD from the Izyum region to the west, south of the city, the 97th light infantry division remained to hold the defense. The 384th Infantry Division occupied a sector along the southern bank of the Seversky Donets near the villages of Andreevka and Petropolie, between the 16th TDI of the 97th Infantry Division. The latter, together with the 101st Infantry Division, fought with the Soviet 343rd Infantry Division, which managed to drive the Germans out of Izyum.

265

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Commander-in-chief of YuZN Timoshenko about delivering concentric strikes by several groups of troops against the enemy who had broken through!:

- the German forces were defined in five infantry and two tank divisions;

- Soviet deterrent and distracting forces were to be: the Kostenko group, part of the forces of the 9th Army, part of the forces of the 57th Army and the Sherstyuk group. The army group Kostenko, under whose command Bobkin's army group passed, consisted of five rifle divisions (253, 41, 266, Z9Zi 270th sd,), two tank brigades (57th and 48th brigade), 6th cavalry corps, four RGK artillery regiments and two PTO artillery regiments. On the morning of May 20, this group was supposed to stop the attack on Kharkov, go on the defensive on the lines reached and, firmly holding them, protect the 6th and 57th armies from attacks from the western direction. Part of the forces of the 57th Army, consisting of six rifle divisions (150, 99, 351, 317, 341st SD, 14th Guards SD), one joint venture of the 333rd SD, 2nd Cavalry Corps (62, 38 and 70th cd), 38th brigade, three artillery regiments of reinforcement had to firmly defend the occupied line. Part of the forces of the 9th Army was supposed to hold back the enemy at the crossings across the Seversky Donets in the area from the mouth of the Bereka to Izyum (according to the atlas of Glantz, there were remnants of the 34th and 60th cavalry divisions of the 5th cavalry corps, the remnants of 106, 333rd and 335th rifle divisions and 92nd brigade, they were opposed by the 384th infantry division and part of the forces of the 97th infantry division). Sherstyuk's group, consisting of four rifle divisions and three tank brigade, was supposed to go on the offensive in the morning of May 22 in the direction of Volokhov Yar and Chuguev (the task of this group was changed, according to Bagramyan, on May 22: "Towards the troops leaving

Combat order of the High Command of the South-Western Direction No. 00320 to the commander of the 6th Army, Lieutenant General A. M. Gorodnyansky and the commander of the army group, Lieutenant General F. Ya. Kostenko, to conduct military operations in order to defeat the enemy in the Izyum direction and the Combat Order of the High Command of the South-Western Direction No. 0143 / OP by the commander of the troops of the Southern Front and the 57th Army for an offensive with the task of encircling and destroying the Barvenkovskaya enemy grouping (both orders dated 19.00 05.19.1942).

266

Konstantin Bykov

from the encirclement, it was necessary to strike a group created by order of the commander-in-chief, which was headed by Major General G.I. Sherstyuk, Deputy Commander of the 38th Army. As part of one rifle division and three tank brigades, it was to attack from the east in the direction of Chepel, Lozovenka, and four left-flank divisions of the 38th Army - to strike in the direction of Volokhov Yar, Zmiev "');

- Soviet strike forces consisted of part of the troops of the 6th, 57th and 9th armies. The 6th Army, consisting of five rifle divisions (337th, 47th, 103rd, 248th and 411th rifle divisions), two tank corps (21st and 23rd corps), the 37th brigade and six artillery regiments of the RGK was supposed to on the morning of May 21, covertly turn around at the turn of Bolshaya Andreevka, Petrovskaya. After that, strike in the direction of Novo Dmitrovka and defeat, in cooperation with the 9th and 57th armies, the enemy's Barvenkovo grouping. On the morning of May 21, the 57th Army was to strike with the forces of at least three rifle divisions, the 2nd Cavalry Corps, three reinforcement artillery regiments and one tank brigade from the Novo-Prigozhay, Fedorovka line, bypassing Barvenkovo from the south to general direction to Viknino. The 9th Army was to strike from the Studenok area in the direction of the 1st Kurulka, to meet the attack of the 6th Army.

Thus, against five infantry and two tank divisions of the enemy, the Soviet shock groups had: 6 more than eight rifle divisions, two tank corps, two tank brigades, one cavalry corps and nine artillery regiments. Both of the orders we mentioned did not list the forces of the 9th Army, which were to advance from Studenok, on the Seversky Donets, to the Kurulka-Dolgenka area. According to the atlas of Glantz, beyond the Seversky Donets were

343rd (bound by the battle for Izyum), 51st (almost defeated), and 296th rifle divisions, 30th cavalry division, 15, 121] and 3rd tank brigades, 78th rifle brigade. All these forces of the 9th Army are opposed

Bagramyan I.Kh. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1977. - S. 119.

267

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

there were three German infantry divisions: the 97th infantry division, the 101st infantry division and the 257th infantry division.

Unfortunately, both of Tymoshenko's orders assess only the ground forces of the enemy and contain instructions only for our ground forces. If we do not take into account aviation, then even without it, a clear advantage (combat, not quantitative) was on the German side. "It is a paradox, but it is a fact": a small number of mobile and well-controlled (due to their small numbers) troops will always defeat a larger number of slow-moving and poorly controlled (due to their large numbers) enemy forces. The rapid movement towards the Germans of just one Soviet infantry division, but planted on vehicles assembled from other formations, would be much more effective than the slow pace of EIGHT SD.

May 20 - 21. Turn 16th TD onto Lozovaya. "The new order caught up with the 16th R7.Plu," reports V. Verten. - Together with the 60th Infantry (Motorized) Division on the right, the 100th Light Infantry Division on the left, the 16th Panzer Division on May 20 strikes in the direction of Lozovaya and Nadezhdino, towards the 11th Corps. The 14th Panzer Division provides cover between Petrovskaya and Semyonovka with a north-west front (.

At 14.00, after von Witleben's CS confidently took Bolshaya Andreevka?, and Krumpen's CS took Gorodishchi,

The point of the attack on Lozovaya, inside the Kharkov cauldron, was to cut through the encircled Soviet troops. It was necessary to cut off the 57th and part of the 9th army from the 6th army of Gorodnyansky and the army group of Bobkin. The 14th TD was supposed to insure the 16th TD against an attack from the northwest, from the army of Gorodnyansky and two Soviet tank corps.

? Thus, the Germans were ahead of the execution of Timoshenko's order, according to which Bolshaya Andreevka was to become the starting point for the offensive of the 6th Army against the enemy that had broken through in its rear. The Germans were opposed here by units of the 2nd Cavalry Corps and, possibly, the 341st Rifle Division.

268

Konstantin Bykov

an order came that the day's task was to move westward as quickly as possible and block the Smirnovka-Terpenevka-southern part of Alimovka line. Three groups, Kleine-Limberg (Keshte-Gtbege), Vota (Usa) and Kramer (Kgateg), units reached the indicated positions at nightfall without serious contact with the enemy and burrowed.

22nd of May. Return of the 16th division to Kamyshevakh. Turn north. Formation of the Kharkov boiler. "Meanwhile, the troops of the beaten Timoshenko passed Lozovaya and marched in long columns to the northeast," the history of the 16th Panzer Division tells us. - They retreated from the blow of 4 German corps that went on the offensive, which they themselves pressed from May 12, when they advanced on the west. Before them, however, there was already a threat that the "bag" would be completely tied. The gap existed even in the Balakleya region. Filling this last hole and preventing the disappearance of Timoshenko's armies became a new task for the 16th Panzer Division. She left blocking positions near Alimovka and went back to

Kamyshevakh. At 05.30 on May 22, the division, having the 14th R7.PLu. on the right, the 60th [O. (p10:.) on the left, began to move in a northwestern direction

Perhaps this is not about Alimovka, but about Akimovka. The Smirnovka-Akimovka line along the Britai Pond was located 8-10 km north-east of Lozovaya and blocked the breakthrough path of the 57th Army of Podlas towards Lozovenka and Petrovskaya. The 6th army of Gorodnyansky will withdraw to the same area from the north-west.

2? lemwep l'ogapz. Sezsysche 4er 16. Rapteg-O1\y1\$1yup 1939 - 1945. - 5. 86.

3 The troops of the 57th Army retreated through Lozovaya to the northeast, the enemy of which in the west and south were the troops of the 6th Romanian and 11th German army corps.

The 40-kilometer space between Balakleya in the north and the Petrovskaya area in the south had not yet been cut by German troops. However, the 14th Panzer Division had already begun to move north - from Petrovskaya to Balakleya.

269

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

from the bridgehead near Petrovskaya to Balakleya — the northern corner support
"bag".

Around 09.30 von Witzleben's battle group was already to the right of Mikhailovsky and was attacked from Volvenkovo. The 16th Panzer Division was on the most important enemy exit route, which had reached the Lozovaya-Protopovka road near the Donets.

The Russians were strong and had English tanks. In a short time, the division had to form a front to the east in order to defeat the enemy located between the division and the Donets. Gyl had to be free before continuing forward.

Kruppen's KO tried in vain to break through to Volvenkovo from the southeast. Only with the onset of darkness did Major Fonderman (Gon4erman) from 1/5.K. 64 (with the 1st battalion of the 64th rifle regiment of the 16th tank division) managed to take this village from the west. Four T-34 tanks remained on the road.

At the same time, the headquarters task force? The 64th regiment attacked the enemy south of Mikhailovsky (with the force of 2 - 3 well-reinforced companies). The detachment took 70 people prisoner; 150 dead were left lying on the battlefield. Meanwhile, from R1.VI. (sapper battalion) and artillery subordinate to it, the battle group Strelke (Ze Ke) was formed. Despite the fighting on her right flank, she struck to the north and reached Chernovsky and the May 1 collective farm east of Terna (hill 199); The battle groups of von Witzleben and Zickenius struck from Hill 199 north to Glazunovka, in the very middle of the enemy's forward line, which was still directed north*. Around 19.00 Pyatigorsk was occupied. Os-

! It seems that in this case the Germans are confusing Lozovaya and Lozovenka.

2 These were Lend-Lease tanks MK P Maya and MK Sh Waepipe (Front illustration. Battles for Kharkov in May 1942. Andrey Galushko, Maxim Kolomiets. - 2000. - No. 6.-S.6-8).

3 Keritep& ygapr\${aHe] can also be translated as "1st echelon".

Here, with the front to the north, our 337th Rifle Division was defending itself against units of the 51st AK.

5 Obviously, we are talking about Pyatigorsk - a settlement 2 - 3 km from the Seversky Donets, west of Balakleya.

..

270

Konstantin Bykov

it was only 2 km away from the positions of the German 11th Army Corps! in the north! Now, however, the enemy exerted all his strength to prevent the unification. Furious fire from all types of weapons brought bitter losses. Only the COP von Witleben lost 77 people that day. Nevertheless, the circle of the environment was practically closed. And now the division began to prepare to use the achieved positions as a base for building a defense with a priority of gravity to the west and south.

If Tymoshenko's columns go for a breakthrough! Again the 16th Panzer Division was in the decisive sector, again on the eastern edge of the pocket, again it was to keep the enemy from trying to escape. Do you still remember the Monastery, Orzhitsa?, Andreevka?

The night passed quietly. However, the enemy columns gathered in wide and deep ravines near Krutoyarka and Lozovenka in front of the strongholds of the 16th Panzer Division and prepared for a breakthrough.

23 - 25 May. The fight against Soviet breakthroughs. As we already know, the troops of the army group of General Kleist (3rd motorized, 44th and 52nd army corps), which also included the object of our study - the 16th tank division, struck under the base of the Barvenkovsky salient. They struck from south to north - from Kramatorsk and Slavyansk to Barvenkovo (Mackenzen's 3rd Army Motorized Corps) and Izyum (44th AK Angelis and 52nd AK Ott'). The troops of the 6th German army located in the north were pinned down by the Soviet attack on Kharkov (21st, 28th and 38th

'
In the north was not the 11th, but the 51st AK. We deliberately do not correct obviously erroneous data in the German text so that the reader has a clear idea of the degree of their reliability.

2 We are talking about the participation of the 16th TD in the Umansky (Monastyrishche) and Kievsky (Orzhitsa) boilers of 1941.

3 Emyep l'o/gape. ChessshsShe 4er 16. Rap2er-P / 1\151yup 1939 - 1945. - 5. 87.

4 Sepega| eg pastured by Eirep BCC.

271

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Miy) and could not strike from Balakleya to the south, towards Kleist. Therefore, the cutting off of the Soviet troops on the Barvenkovsky ledge was carried out by the forces of only one Mackensen's 3rd corps. To reinforce the corps, the reserves of the Kleist group and part of the formations of the 44th AK, including the [6th Panzer Division. The units transferred to the 3rd AK (mot.) first moved from Izyum to the west. Here, in the area of Kamyshevakh and Petrovskaya, the 16th Panzer Division met with the 14th Panzer Division, which was going north, to Balakleya.

After a short blow to the west and southwest, the 16th TD returned to the 14th Panzer Division and together with it broke through to the area west of Balakleya, thus closing the encirclement around the Soviet troops.

The area, on the western side of which the troops of the 6th and 57th armies, the Bobkin group and units of the 9th army remained surrounded, and on the eastern side - the 38th army, units (mainly rear) 6 th Army and part of the 9th Army, was a strip oriented from north to south with a width of 20-25 km. The Germans settled in this zone in two fronts: the "western" passed along the meridian of Lozovenka, the "eastern" - along the meridian of Petrovskaya and Protopopovka on the Seversky Donets. The "Western" front was the most powerful - it was defended, striking inside the encirclement, by the 16th TD, 60th Infantry Division (Mot.) and the 1st Mountain Division, to which on the northern flank

joined the 23rd and 3rd tank divisions. The protection of the "eastern" front, and from the east, deblocking strikes could follow - was carried out by only two divisions: the 14th tank and 384th infantry. However, given the small width of the space controlled by the Germans and the high mobility of the four tank and one motorized divisions located here, one should not think that the deblocking units of the 38th army of Moskalenko could not break through the front of "only two" divisions. At the right time and in the right place, the Germans knew how to achieve organizational and quantitative superiority. As for organizational superiority, then, as the commander of the communications department of the fighter-pro

272

Konstantin Bykov

of the anti-tank artillery battery of the 131st tank brigade of the 23rd tank corps Lev Maidanik: "This is a terrible thing - a well-organized encirclement by the enemy."

Thus, after the closing of the encirclement ring on May 22-23, the Soviet troops leaving it had to:

- to break through the "western" front of the ring;
- to break through the space entirely controlled by highly mobile land and aviation formations;
- break through the "eastern" front of the ring;
- force the Seversky Donets.

"On May 23, the enemy was already 500 meters away," we again give the floor to V. Verten. — Last night, the enemy attacked our left neighbor, the 60th [O.(ppo:.), and broke through a gap | km between the left flank of the Krumpfen CS and the right flank of 60.1.0. (then:.). In the ravine, in the area of this breakthrough, the enemy gathered with the strength of the regiment. Tank company Muller (We[eg] and MTU-VI. Muesa quickly occupied the starting position for the attack. But the diabolical fire of anti-tank guns and mortars of all calibers hit the columns, and the enterprise was suspended.

Both sides fought a strong artillery fight. At a height of 208.8, contact was established with P7.K 21.201'. '

On the night of May 24, the enemy again broke through in the area of positions 60.1.). (n1og) near Krasnaya Balka (a village 5-6 km south-east of Lozovenka. - Auth.). Reinisch's reserve combat group (Reinisch) was moved here. It was created on May 20 from sedentary units of the 16th motorized rifle brigade (from the 2nd battalion of the 79th motorized rifle regiment - 1/79, the 2nd battalion of the 64th motorized rifle regiment without the 8th company - N/b4, 12th company of the 79th motorized rifle regiment without

' 201st tank regiment of the 23rd tank division. In order to close the encirclement around the southern grouping of our troops, the 23rd TD, having left the battles with our northern grouping (38A and 28A), turned south and crossed the Seversky Donets. For convenience and centralization of management for the implementation of a common task in the general area, parts of the 23rd TD were subordinated to Mackensen.

273

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

anti-tank platoon - 12/79, infantry guns platoon - [S.Gle, heavy infantry guns platoon - \$.[S.Gle', headquarters of the 79th motorized rifle regiment - V2 {5.ZaB.79) and - was the chalu in the reserve of the related Sh.AK (3rd army corps)?. On 23 May this battle group was

subordinated to 60.1.). (v01) and was supposed to take up positions southeast of Lozovenka - near Krasnaya Balka.

When at 04.00 the task force (1st echelon) arrived in Shtepol (Uero]], a defensive battle against the Russians was already raging here. The enemy tried to break through with 19 tanks. 3/K 21.1603 was ironed and unceremoniously destroyed. Reinisch threw a motorcycle rifle platoon into the gap, which fought with exceptional courage; however, having quickly lost 14 men, he stopped and was relieved by 8/79 (8th Company, 79th Regiment). The company held out, and at 11.30 the tanks "60.1.0. (t0:1.) launched a counterattack on the enemy. The 2nd Battalion of the 79th Regiment (1/79) now took up defensive positions south of Krasnaya Balka at Hill 182.5.

The 3rd sapper company of the 16th sapper battalion (3.ÿ1.16) from the Strelke battle group withstood a heavy night battle.

On Sunday Trinity, May 24, at 0600, the enemy began

! HEAT shells from light and heavy infantry guns penetrated armor 75–90 mm and 160 mm thick, respectively.

2? On the morning of May 19, the 16th TD was subordinate to the 3rd AK (mot.) Mackensen. During the battle, Mackensen's corps, originally consisting of the 14th TD, 100th Lpdi of the 1st GD, also included: th and 23rd TD, 68th and 125th Infantry Division (Mackenzen E. From the Bug to the Caucasus: Sh Tank Corps in the campaign against Soviet Russia 1941 - 1942. S. 304 - 305).

3 3 / V21.160 - 3rd company of the 160th regiment. However, there were no infantry regiments with this number in the 60th Infantry Division (Mot.). Obviously, we are talking about the 3rd battery of the 160th artillery regiment of the 60th infantry regiment (mot.).

* Preparing for the summer campaign of 1942, the Germans, according to B. Müller-Gillebrand (Land Army of Germany. 1933 - 1945 - M. : "Isographus", 2002), introduced one tank into the staff of infantry motorized divisions - kovy battalion, consisting of two companies of light and one company of medium tanks. The composition of the 60th infantry division (mot.), according to the "Front illustration" (Galushko A., Kolomiets M. Fights for Kharkov in May 1942. - 2000. - No. 6), included the 160th tank battalion.

274

Konstantin Bykov

attack from Krutoyarka on Lozovenka!, the western part of which was occupied on 60.1.0.(to®). The Scheidemann tank company (espeetapp) was assigned to support the affected neighbor and made good progress. To strengthen the thin line, between 16.P7.PUm. and 60.1.0.(t0:) was put forward by 1.Seb.Pum. (1st mountain division), which was released after the capture of Barvenkov.

After a good night received a joyful message: coming from the north 3.R7.PL \. (3rd Panzer Division) reached the height held by KS Strelke. The boiler was also closed in the Balakleya region. But will its thin walls withstand the blows of a desperate and merciless enemy?

The already mentioned Lev Maidanik told us about what despair and ruthlessness of those surrounded are:

"They walk quickly, silently. Here they come, and we also join this human stream. It is difficult to say how many people were in this large crowd, perhaps five hundred, or a thousand, or even more. It became clear that people were going ahead... This had already happened in our front-line practice, however, in simpler environments. Even tanks left the path of the angry crowd, as the German tankers knew that there would definitely be a fighter with an anti-tank grenade or a bottle of incendiary liquid. The crowd destroyed the captured German auto-matchers and machine gunners, as always, while suffering very heavy losses. The German soldiers knew all this and were justifiably afraid of the angry crowd, just as they were afraid of frost, of fighting at night.

time, woodlands. How we were afraid of the environment. Ahead of this gathering of foot soldiers, cavalry,

The 198th brigade of the 21st TC was located in Krutoyarka, to the south - the 317th rifle division, in Lozovenka - the 103rd rifle division. There are so many Soviet units on the German military maps of this region that it makes no sense to list them - it is clear that after the "collapse" of the front, the remnants of various units, organized groups, unorganized crowds and individuals huddled together.

* Ietyep I/o[tape. Cessce 4er 16. Rap7er-OmMljuop 1939 - 1945. - 5. 88.

275

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

mortars, artillerymen, tankmen, there was a cavalry colonel...

"Now (May 25. - Auth.) The division has turned to the left," continues the historian of the 16th TD. - During this movement, KS Strelke, together with Vota's battalion - the 11th company of the 79th rifle regiment (11.5.V 1.79), the 7th battery of the 16th artillery regiment (7.Ap. -At 21.16), tank company of Scheidemann and an armored personnel carrier (s) of rocket artillery (VigGKogreg-5R \ / 2) - attacked the front to the south of the settlement Ploskoyarsky? and a height of 175. Cold and hot jets from flamethrower tanks* hit the walls of houses and set them on fire, instilling panic in the Russians. But soon they came to their senses and knocked out four German cars. Enemy cavalry? fled in a furious gallop. The shooters exterminated her, firing machine guns from the belt until the saddles were empty. The dead dragged in stirrups, the horses reared up,

fell to the ground.

But from behind the corners of houses, from wrecked cars, from windows and cellars, the Russians, belligerent, burning with hatred, still defended themselves, firing from their submachine guns (M.R!5.), throwing hand grenades.

When they were surrounded, they threw away their weapons, approached with incredulous looks, showed their passes and

'
Memoirs of L.I. Maidanika "In the Kharkov cauldron" (from the newspaper "New Russian Word", New York. - 1995. - 19.05, 26.05) posted on the site "Forgotten Regiment".

2 Obviously, here we are talking about a self-propelled 10-barreled launcher on a half-track armored personnel carrier \$4.ÿÿÿ.4. Shooting was carried out with 150- or 210-mm turbojet mines. The installation had an anti-aircraft machine gun and a radio station (see: Shunkov V.N. Weapons of the Wehrmacht. - Minsk: Harvest, 1999. - P. 233).

3 Obviously, this settlement was located in the area of the current Ploskoyarsky tract.

'Original: Natrap7er. Possibly, we are talking about flamethrower tanks based on the R7.P light tank, which were armed with two flamethrower mounts with a flamethrowing range of 50 m.

> Vetom area could go to break through the 26th and 49th Cavalry Divisions of the 6th Cavalry Corps.

276

Konstantin Bykov

asked for a cigarette... Courageous civilians looked out from around the corners. An old woman stood in front of her burning house. As one of the flamethrower tanks rolled away with her oven, she fell to her knees and wringed her hands in grief; the young daughter tried to comfort her.

The enemy was driven back, a large number of guns and various other weapons were captured, as well as 400 prisoners!

Behind the spearhead of the 3rd Panzer Division (3.R7.GUu.), Krumpfen's battle group also turned, together with Vota on the right flank, they attacked south - into the core of the Russian positions near Krutoyarka.

They were joined by the 1st Battalion of the 64th Fonderman Rifles (1./5B \$1.64, Endegmann). The daily task was the area of Bereki from Radyanka to Pavlovka (obviously, if one is guided by modern maps, we are talking about Sovetskoye and Pavlovka II. - Auth.). The defector Ras said that the enemy had pulled an army corps to Krutoyarka with orders to break through to the east through the dominant height of 186.0!; in the course of their own reconnaissance, it was found that in the area of \u200b\u200bMikhailovka Balka? there are about three regiments. At 13.45 the enemy really attacked in the indicated direction, but was repulsed. The 8th company of the 64th regiment (8/64) cleared the ravines with a rake of their 28-cm projectiles (Ui IKogregt?), but more and more waves of Russians tried to capture the height of 186.0. The planned rotation of the division was suspended, the day's mission was cancelled. Russian units continued to penetrate into the beam near Lozo-

Height 186.0 is located in the center of the Krutoyarka-Lozovenka-Shopenka triangle.

2 Obviously, we are talking about the Mikhailovsky Log beam, which is located between Krutoyarka and Lozovenka.

3 UpiKb gregp - literally "throwing projectile" - a 280-mm high-explosive rocket that hit the enemy with fragments within a radius of 800 meters and completely destroyed a brick building with a direct hit. Multi-barrel launchers of these missiles were mounted on wheeled carriages or armored vehicles. These missiles could also be launched from primitive wooden frames. In the latter case, special calculations for maintenance and firing were not assigned.

277

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

wreaths and Krutoyarki. The urgently requested connection "Stuk" could not start due to poor weather.

At 14.00, after a strong artillery preparation, the 1st mountain division (1.SeB.PGU.), having crossed the front line of 60.1.0. (to®), launched an offensive!. But soon the left flank of the attacking chasseurs lay in front of the left flank of the Reinisch CS2.

The enemy was concentrated here in the beams, which were not visible. Like a stormy tide, the enemy poured into an avalanche attack, with his transport, horsemen and infantry, a force of about 6,000 people, and broke through to the east. Only in the second half of the day, aviation was able to attack the units that had broken through. But by nightfall it was not possible to close the place of the breakthrough. The enemy kept moving east. But in front of him, however, lay another obstacle - crossings across the Donets!

In the area of height 182.5 - where the positions of the 6th company of the 79th regiment were - Russian groups also tried to break through, but to no avail.

All available forces, communications platoons and headquarters were assigned to the defense that night. But it was relatively quiet in the sector of the 16th Panzer Division. Only rare artillery fire on her positions was disturbing.

At three o'clock in the morning, the Reinisha COP learned of a Russian breakthrough to the north of their positions near Lozovenka. The group was surrounded.

It wasn't until lunchtime that the gap was closed. The units that made their way to the Donets near Petrovskaya were defeated and captured by convoy units and tank reserves.

Well, not everyone was captured, of course. One of those who

Mackensen (Op. cit. p. 304): "... in the afternoon of May 25, the 1st GD had to go on the offensive through the positions of the 60th Motorized Division in order to thus release it from the battles as the first mobile connection".

2? Mackensen (ibid): "But the offensive of the mountain rangers ran into an attempt to break through the huge masses of the enemy, who simply rolled over the thin defensive front of the 60th motorized division."

3 Emmyep Yogape. Sessshsche 4er 16. Rapner-00! y1\$1op 1939 - 1945. - b. 88 - 89.

278

Konstantin Bykov

managed to cross the Seversky Donets, literally - over the corpses of horses, was Lev Maidanik from the 131st tank brigade. The space between the "western" and "eastern" fronts of the Germans Maydanik overcame with various groups of our fighters and commanders. A brief chronology of these days is described by him in the source we have already named:

May 22-23:

"It must be said that before May 24, the actions of our brigade, and other units and formations, were quite organized. Reconnaissance was carried out systematically, if necessary, they entered into battle, and if circumstances did not allow, they maneuvered over a large area. On May 22, units of the brigade stood near the village, on the outskirts of which the medical battalion of the rifle division was located ...

At night, we moved and stopped near the village, dug cracks in the steppe, and at dawn the enemy aircraft began the methodical extermination of our people. Between air raids, we sat on the parapets of the trenches, there were few conversations, the general tension was felt ... The day of May 23 somehow passed sadly ... "...

May 24:

"The day of May 24 was remembered as cloudy, from low clouds it periodically drizzled with light rain, but it was warm. Due to unfavorable weather conditions, the enemy aviation was inactive, unlike the previous sunny days, when the planes were chasing even individual fighters surrounded by ours and the German pilots shot them from machine guns.

We focused on a huge field near the area, which the commanders, considering the map, called Buzovoy beam. The terrain had a noticeable slope, and this depression went beyond the horizon. Everywhere were cars, tractors, field and anti-aircraft guns, tanks, cisterns, kitchens, wagons, and so on. Despite the anxiety, we still believed, wanted to believe that the command would find a way out of the situation ...

Suddenly, explosions of several mines were heard nearby, which

279

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

made me rethink the situation. I immediately thought: what am I doing here with these telephones when the situation is so complicated ?! I grabbed the carbine and jumped to the ground. To the left, on a low hillock, sat a stout, broad, already middle-aged fighter, such as are usually ridden on military wagons. Instead of eyes, he had two white bubbles protruding strongly forward, he groaned in an eerie voice, grabbing and

ground with young grass. On the other side of this hillock, some Red Army soldier was changing into civilian clothes. He was wearing an embroidered Ukrainian shirt, and with one foot he already got into his trousers, while the other did not get into the trousers, probably because of haste or excitement. I ran around the place where our battery was ...

Fighters and commanders ran past and passed in one direction, one at a time or in groups, horsemen drove past, sometimes cars passed over the potholes, waddling over. And suddenly a group of fighters, about thirty people, ran across this general movement, the commander ran ahead with a pistol in his hand. As he walked he shouted:

Why aren't we Russians, brothers?!

I dejectedly moved in the direction the others were walking. I was overtaken by two mounted Red Army men who stopped near a group of infantrymen. Those had rifles with fixed bayonets for some reason. When I approached this group, the first cavalryman, more talkative, poured himself a shag from an infantryman's pouch and excitedly talked about breaking through the encirclement by fighting horsemen. From his story, I understood that the cavalry had broken through the encirclement and our units were moving beyond the Seversky Donets, where there was a defense outside the encirclement.

"There, you see, the villages are burning, it was ours that gave spirit to the Fritz.

Indeed, dotted lines of burning villages were clearly visible going into the distance. Everything indicated that the Red Army soldier, heated up by the battle, on a lathered horse, correctly

280

Konstantin Bykov

outlined the situation. It became a little easier, as it became clear where to go. And I went.

The still cloudy day with low hanging clouds ended on May 24th. Before I had time to walk a couple of kilometers, I saw a group of fighters from our battery and a political instructor next to the well-worn road. They were digging something, standing knee-deep in an already dug pit. I ran up and happily announced:

"Comrade political instructor, the horsemen broke through, and ours are coming out!.. Look, the villages are on fire, it was the horsemen who drove out the Germans, and behind the Northern Donets ours," I repeated the words of the cavalryman ... "...

May 25:

"Shortly before dawn, the clouds cleared, the terrain began to be visible, and immediately two blunt-winged Italian aircraft appeared. Here they are flying low over us. Without waiting for further, I jumped out of the car and, stepping aside, walked along the road.

The morning began on May 25th. Everything is visible, and here the sun rises in a very clear, cloudless east. I am walking with a small group of fighters...

It became warmer, the sun warmed the damp cooled earth. And I noticed that I had fewer and fewer traveling companions. But fighters, commanders, political workers lie and sit in the huge transverse gullies. I understood: you shouldn't go during the day, because the Germans are all around, and ours have to hide here from night to night. I came up to the ravine, where I saw: basically there are commanders with insignia, that is, they, in all likelihood, are not going to surrender. I turned into this deep ravine. I lay down in its lower part, began to look and listen. Gradually, the situation became clearer. In the upper part, already on the uppermost terrace, a large tree grew, on which a lieutenant colonel sat with binoculars. He reported down on the situation: German vehicles were moving along the road... Our prisoners were being taken to Petrovskoe...

I liked the fact that the commanders energetically weighed all the circumstances, consulted, climbed to the bottom

281

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the colonel, discussing the changing situation with him, sat over the map, considering options for passage to the river... In the middle of the day, shells began to fly overhead with a loud rustle. Someone clarified that they were blowing up Katyushas ...

Returning to the ravine, I lay down in my original place. I wanted to sleep. I thought I heard some kind of hum. Then I decided that it seemed to be due to fatigue and nervous tension. But no, I come out of hiding, and a picture terrifying in its horror appears to my eyes: along the long ravine, where these gullies descend, a crowd of thousands of our fighters, some of them with their hands up, are walking. In captivity! These yesterday's fit fighters look unrecognizable. Hunched over, they look down at their feet, as if looking for something on the ground. Everyone has a concentrated look, and everyone is silent. The sounds of shod boots and boots hitting the ground are heard loudly. Some are in cotton uniforms, most are in overcoats, without headgear, many without belts. Here is one skinny duffel bag on his back, here is another fighter with a half-empty duffel bag. This one has a flat bowler hat on a belt and a spoon protrudes from the top. At the extreme Red Army man, the strap of his overcoat dangles on one button. Nobody talks to anyone. ONLY THE STOMP OF THOUSAND FEET IS HEARED...

We, who went out into the ravine, are returning to our former places in the gully. The clatter subsides, and then it becomes completely silent. The picture of surrender shocked me. Lying on the ground, I feel some kind of nervous breakdown. At least I had the mental strength to endure all this! How many times I go over in my head all the options for getting out of this hopeless situation. Again and again I remind myself of the truth: for me, captivity is out of the question. For me, captivity is death...

We keep walking at the same fast pace. Later, when it became lighter, I begin to distinguish the faces of those walking. Here in the front line are four middle-aged women in quilted jackets, apparently doctors, and then there are two with oriental faces, they are very young, with mustaches, and this artillery lieutenant with a small group of fighters, for sure

282

Konstantin Bykov

Jew, but basically, as in our entire army, there are Russians. Behind, somewhat behind the main group, are the wounded, who are able to move.

It became light, the terrain was lowering, and in the distant haze a forest was guessed. The colonel again gives the command to move to the right. I try to follow his command, I go to the right. Suddenly, machine-gun fire is heard simultaneously in front, left and right. Traces of tracer bullets are immediately visible, pink on the left, green on the right. The trails intersect far ahead of us, and then approach. A terrible thought flashes by: why, they will lay us all down here. But here is an incomprehensible, downright miracle: when there were very few tracer lines of fire left before us, both machine guns fell silent at the same time. It can be assumed that the German machine gunners tried to detain us, but their nerves could not stand the illogical actions of the crowd that continued to move. We continued to walk silently and quickly towards the now clearly visible forest below, past the pits for vehicles and tanks, in which two or three wounded were now lying, unable to move.

To my right, someone shouted:

Brothers, help! Horse... Help, brothers\..

I slowed down my step and drew attention to a tall Red Army soldier who had no left boot, no left trouser leg, and his whole leg was bandaged. He leaned on a rifle. Apparently, despite the injury, he decided to leave the encirclement, but he could not go further. Therefore, noticing a horse grazing in the distance, he asked everyone to bring this horse to him. He saw that I paid attention to him, and began to beg me:

- Brother, dear, a horse ... Bring the horse ...

I threw a fighter on a horse, hit her hard with a carbine. The wounded man bent down to the withers, and the horse slowly, limping, went. I lagged behind everyone and now ran with all my might, catching up. Having caught up with those with whom I left the encirclement on this night from May 25 to 26, I looked back. It seemed that the horse was already carrying its rider a little more confidently, leaning towards the withers...

283

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

After walking a bit through the forest, we found ourselves near the water. Here it is, finally, the Seversky Donets... When I approached the river, the cavalry colonel who led us was sitting on a stump near the water and was examining the map. People stretched out in a chain and went through the forest along the path to the left along the river, that is, up in relation to the current. I lingered near the colonel, where a large group of those who had walked with us at night remained. Two fighters also came up here, who said that they were upstream and did not dare to swim across the river because of the spring floods, undercurrents, strong swirls of water with funnels, that even good swimmers drown there and the general drowned. In addition, German submachine gunners are still haunted. The Colonel, looking at the map, said:

"Well, there is a bridge two kilometers down the river.

And everyone was drawn down along the river. Soon we saw the bridge. It was a strong wooden structure, which was approached by a country road. The wooden covering of the bridge on our side at the point where the water approached was torn off. Wooden supports of large diameter were visible. Further on the bridge, separate boards were preserved, and starting from the middle, the bridge was practically intact. It seemed that no attempt was made to blow it up, but part of its cover was simply blown away by ice drift and flood. Many dead horses were washed to the bridge by the current. We began to move to the opposite bank. So - where on the corpses of horses, then leaning on a pile, then on a surviving board - they crossed the river ... "

May 26 - 28. Last attempts to break out of the encirclement. Russian paratroopers. "On the morning of May 26, when the bright sun rose and shone in the east, the Stuka squadron arrived from the southwest," V. Verten proceeds to the story of the apotheosis of attempts to break through. — As she turned over the positions of the division, the soldiers joyfully greeted her from their holes. Then the planes with a piercing howl of sirens fell on Krutoyarka and Balka Mikhailovka. The bomb blasts drowned out all the rest of the noise of the battle. Like a thundercloud

284

Konstantin Bykov

ko, the smoke of explosions swirled over enemy positions. The air raid continued for four hours, breaking the enemy's resistance. The enemy suffered horrendous losses. The survivors were paralyzed with terror. From 11:00 the enemy began to flee to the south. Smaller groups moved to the southeast. The division began the pursuit. Together with the 23rd Panzer Division at 1200, the Strelke Combat Group, the 1st Battalion of the 79th Rifle Regiment of Vota (1./5B \$1.79, \V/oga) and the 1st Battalion of the 64th Rifle Regiment of Fonderman launched an offensive (1./5K 2.64, Eopdegta) with Muller's tank company. At 13.30, after a tough fight, [./79 penetrated Krutoyarka and cleared the settlement. Lozovenka also fell, and the remnants of the enemy forces were destroyed.

The battlefield was littered with trucks, peasant wagons, weapons and implements of every kind; dead and seriously wounded Russians lay along with the corpses of horses. The enemy came out of the ravines and surrendered to the "sixteenth". The interpreter asked the two captured staff officers what their opinion was about the outcome of the war. They carried themselves proudly and confidently declined to answer. After the first, superficial, clearing of the battlefield, 6,225 people were taken prisoner. Many more groups ready to surrender were in front of the front, but the lines we had reached could not be crossed. Guaranteed booty for the 6th Army approaching from the west? The Russian regiments were left to their own devices.

At night, scattered enemy units gathered under the energetic leadership of several commissars and officers and occupied Lozovenka; The 11th company of the 64th Infantry Regiment (11./5\$B21.64) repulsed the attack from Mikhailovka Balka. The regimental headquarters, located in Chopinka, immediately redeployed to ensure its security.

The sapper battalion (R1.VI.), which has been in Vysokoe since the evening (\U/uzzoK!), has also posted guards.

' The German 6th Army from the west, the Romanians from the southwest pushed the encircled Soviet troops to the front of Mackensen.

285

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

On the night of May 27, at about 01.30, to the north of the village, a many-voiced hoarse "Hurrah!" suddenly rang out.

Anxiety! The night is completely dark! Nobody knew the area. The vehicles were parked tightly together in a small forest. Dangerous position. The enemy set fire to houses, cars with ammunition detonated. However, the soldiers soon overcame their first horror and began to gather. Password: "Sappers".

The sapper armored platoon (Pl. —Papter2a=) hit the dense columns of the enemy rushing forward. The sappers rushed after the combat vehicles. Close combat! Radio: We urgently ask for support! It was not until 0530 that Graf's tank company (P7.Kr., Orga) approached this swampy lowland. The sappers are ahead again. Among them, the captain of the medical service, Dr. Wengel (S{abzag7e Og. \U'en?e]), assisted the wounded, despite enemy fire. They took 2,700 prisoners, including those dropped behind the paratroopers at night. When morning finally dawned, the positions of the engineer battalion (ÿ1.VI.) were surrounded by hundreds of dead and wounded Russians. Three divisions tried to break through here.

At 2 o'clock in the morning, an alarm was also announced in the Reinish battle group. With tanks, infantry and cavalry, the enemy broke through already to Volvenkovo, the 120th infantry regiment of the 60th motorized infantry division ([shE.K 21.120, 60.1.).to:.) entered into a heavy defensive battle. At 03.00 to Volny! the 2nd battalion of the 64th regiment (1/64) approached, followed by the 2nd battalion of the 79th regiment (P/79). Their front was oriented to the north against the right flank of the breaking enemy. The first goal was the road Lozovenka - Protopopovka. The battalion took Hill 186.6 and pushed the enemy back to Novaya Serpukhovka. This flank attack saved the 120th Regiment from encirclement. Hauptmann Dorman (Dogtapp) received a gunshot wound to the thigh. In the first half of the day, the Reinish COP marched on Novaya Serpukhovka and took 1,000 prisoners. inhabited

' Volnoe is a village on the Lozovenka-Volvenkovo-Protopopovka line.

286

Konstantin Bykov

point burned out. On May 28, after a quiet night, the battle group returned to the 16th Panzer Division (16.R7.P / m.).

The battle in the Kharkov cauldron was over, the critical days of the Trinity were over.

In a narrow area, in some places about 25 km wide, the surrounded Russians tried to break through. Paratroopers came to their aid."

In more detail about the paratroopers mentioned in the history of the 16th Panzer Division, we were told by the commander of the landing company Dmitry Nebolsin?, who was captured by the Germans in the Lozovenka area on May 28 or 29, 1942.

On the eve of the Battle of Kharkov, 18-year-old Lieutenant Nebolsin, a graduate of the Moscow Military School of Radio Specialists named after V.I. Stalin, was the head of communications in the 270th guards mortar division. The Katyusha division consisted of twelve BM-13 installations, used a powerful RSBF radio station for communication with the front headquarters, and several RB-12 radio stations and a linear telephone connection for communication within the division. Since May, the division was located in the Barvenkovo area, then it was attached to the 6th Army of A.M. Gorodnyansky. D. Nebolsin himself, with the beginning of the offensive of the Soviet troops, was sent as a communications delegate from his division to the headquarters of the 6th Army.

"The headquarters of the Sixth had very unreliable communications with the advancing divisions," Nebolsin recalled. - The radio communication did not work for various reasons, the linear-telephone communication failed every now and then. As a result, command and control of the troops was lost. More and more often I began to be distracted by other tasks that were not part of my duties, but which I could not refuse. Already twice I had to take off on a U-2 plane to deliver secret packages to the headquarters of the "lost" divisions ...

Passed Barvenkovo. The encirclement was shrinking

| Yenyep Sho[eape. Sessshsche 4er 16. Rapterg-P01u1\$10p 1939 - 1945.

b. 89 - 91. 2 Nebolsin D. Twice junior lieutenant. Website "Forgotten Regiment".

287

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

stronger and stronger. German leaflets were scattered everywhere calling for surrender. At first they collected and burned, and then they waved their hand - there were too many of them, and the enemy planes kept pouring and pouring new ones. The troops became uncontrollable. The headquarters of the Sixth Army was rushing about from one place to another, nervousness, fuss, fear of inevitable disaster appeared in the behavior of the staff commanders. Scattered, half-broken remnants of divisions retreated to the center of the "cauldron" with overcrowded field hospitals and other rear services. Panic reigned all around. The air was jammed with many radio stations of the enemy, and with great difficulty I managed to find the necessary call signs ...

During those May days, I witnessed a huge and inexplicable tragedy. With my own eyes I saw the death of many people, hundreds of corpses lying around, decomposing in the hot Ukrainian sun. I saw how the German "aces" shot down the Cossack cavalry from a strafing flight, which had nowhere to go in the open steppe. The corpses of the horses lay with the dead Cossacks...

I was not released from the headquarters of the 6th Army, although my presence there, as a communications delegate from the Katyushas, no longer mattered ...

Unexpectedly, I was instructed to go to the headquarters of the 337th Rifle Division, the location of which at the army headquarters had a vague idea. I understood the order, but where and how to look for the headquarters of the division in the general chaos was not clear to me. Approximately they showed me on the map where the "loss" could be located, with which there had been no connection for two days ...

And yet, closer to noon, I was lucky to find the headquarters of the 337th. The division, retreating, fought the most stubborn battles in the area of Lozova. The division commander, a middle-aged colonel, stood in the trench, leaning on the parapet, and looked into the bi-

Nebolsin was mistaken - the 337th Rifle Division was originally located in the area west of Balakleya, and not in the area of Lozovaya. Precisely because the division was at Balakleya, Nebolsin managed to get out of the encirclement so quickly that they managed to throw him into it again.

288

Konstantin Bykov

to the opposite side of the wrinkled steep ridge, where mines were exploding and small human figures were moving. From there came the firing of rifles and machine guns, which either intensified or subsided, echoing in a deep ravine. There was a fight."

Around May 23-24, the 337th Rifle Division launched a breakthrough, and Nebolsin managed to get out of the encirclement. According to the maps from David Glantz's album, until May 22, the 337th Rifle Division did not participate in active battles. It was located with the front to the north, along the southern coast of the Seversky Donets, in the area of the settlements of Melovaya, Glazunovka, Chervonnaya Gusarovka. On the opposite bank of the Seversky Donets was the 44th Infantry DIVISION.

On May 22, the rear of the 337th Rifle Division, on its western wing, was attacked by the 16th Panzer Division, which approached from the south ("... the battle groups of von Witzleben and Sickenius struck from Hill 199 to the north to Glazunovka, in the very middle of the front line the enemy, which was still directed to the north..."). At the same time, also from the south, in the rear of the 337th SD, on its eastern wing, the 14th Panzer Division struck. At the same time, only from the north, the 3rd Panzer Division hit the western flank of this long-suffering SD, and the 44th Infantry Division hit the eastern flank. Three tank and one infantry - this was too much for one rifle ... Obviously, it was at this time that the connection between the headquarters of the 6th Army and the 337th Rifle Division was lost, and D. Nebolsin went with the radio station to restore it.

Having fallen under a heavy blow from the enemy, the 337th division was dismembered into parts and surrounded. Obviously, the parts of the division's eastern flank closest to the "mainland" were able to get out of the encirclement. Since Nebolsin writes about the exit of the Soviet tank unit to the location, we, based on the deployment of these units along Glanets, can assume that it was the 114th or 64th tank brigade from the group of General Sherstyuk, which tried to release the encircled .

What happened next?

10 The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 289

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

After a quick check, those who left the encirclement were washed in a bathhouse and changed into piebald suits and capes. Of these, a consolidated special-purpose battalion of five companies was formed. Nebolsin was appointed commander of the fifth separate company. Then a word to himself:

"Our companies had to perform an urgent and very important task. Which? We didn't know.

Another short summer night has passed. At dawn, the fifth company was alerted. The weather changed dramatically, it got colder, shaggy clouds were running low like in summer, which either allowed heavy rain, or drizzled. We walked light, wrapping ourselves in brand new raincoats. Soaked earth slid and champed underfoot. They carried only weapons and gas masks, the rest of their simple personal property: overcoats, duffel bags and something else was taken away in a car. Where and why we were going: no one knew, even the major who accompanied us only shrugged his shoulders - he himself,
I don't know anything...

After walking fifteen kilometers, we approached our destination. There was a parachute tower in the clearing, and between the trees, stretched out in a row, were green tents, around which people in white coats were fussing...

On the second day, after a short briefing, we jumped from the tower twice...

Several days have passed. From morning to evening there were continuous trainings: shooting, throwing grenades, briefings and, of course, jumping from the tower...

We were waiting for the order to take off. I already knew about the mission. Its essence was as follows: behind enemy lines, not far from the village of Lozovenka, the headquarters of the Sixth Army was hiding, which did not manage to get out of the encirclement. Marshal Tymoshenko himself allegedly was in it. Our companies must parachute, take up all-round defense and make it possible to evacuate the headquarters by planes that were standing at the forest airfield ready to take off ...

On May 26 readiness number one was announced. I was called to the colonel, where I met Captain Bakhov and the commanders

290

Konstantin Bykov

other mouths. The instruction was given by the colonel. On the maps, the landing site was clarified. My company will land first. After completing the task, the paratroopers in groups or platoons were supposed to leave towards Poltava to join the partisan detachment, which had already been warned about our mission ...

It has already dawned. The last minutes of the restless night were running out. Against the background of the pale sky, the crowns of the trees appeared more and more sharply. The morning began on May 27, 1942. I will remember this date until my last breath. This day divided my life in two with a deep abyss, and the countdown of the most difficult physical and moral trials in my life began with it. Finally filed team:

— Platoon commanders to check the presence of people and equipment!

A small check, and Captain Bakhov, not at all in a military way, said:

- It's time, friends. Go.

The engines roared at the airport. In the light of low searchlights, monster-like planes taxied one after another to the start. I felt extremely awkward with a parachute, it put pressure on my back, shoulders, and neck. There was no reserve parachute - during combat jumps

was supposed to...

They flew for about an hour. Finally, the engines slowed down, and the car silently began to descend. A warning light came on in the cabin. The navigator came out of the cockpit and gave the command: "Get ready!" Then he took off the door and shouted:

- One by one! Let's go!

The lieutenant, the platoon commander, was the first to disappear in the doorway, after him, one after another, without fuss, the fighters left the plane. There was no delay, no one leaned back, although everyone knew for sure that this minute could be the last in their lives. I jumped after everyone, as befitted a company commander, letting seventeen paratroopers go ahead of me.

It was light enough. Without hesitation, I stepped into the abyss...

291

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The landing force, which was under aimed fire, was shot while still in the air. Many children died who did not have time to land. But even on earth it was no sweeter: death raged, shells exploded, bullets whistled, piercing into the awakened air and dusty earth.

I still can't understand why almost untrained fighters were sent on a particularly important task, were there really no regular paratroopers in the army? Planes were found for this purpose! Why was only ours landed out of five companies? However, you can ask dozens of such "why?". Now, of course, no one will answer them. Perhaps the time was in a hurry, because if you were late for a day, or maybe for several hours, and the headquarters of the Sixth Army would have been taken by the Germans, perhaps there were some other reasons that confused the original plans. Everything could be. It's just a pity that so many young lives have been wasted in vain.

The wounded screamed, called for help, the dead lay in lumps next to parachutes fluttering in the wind. The junior political instructor Melkov, a young, brave, cheerful guy, died. He ran to help the wounded, suddenly stumbled and fell to the ground, his cap flew off to the side. He didn't even cry out... The blood-stained head buried itself in the ground. And almost at the same moment an explosion rumbled, and a sharp pain shot through me, a fragment pierced my arm above the elbow. Blood instantly stained the left sleeve of the tunic and quickly, quickly flowed to the ground. I almost passed out. The fighter ran up and ripped open the sleeve, tore out the protruding fragment with his teeth and pulled the wound with a bandage.

The pilots performed their task perfectly. They delivered and dropped the troops at exactly the specified location. The headquarters, for the sake of which one hundred and forty soldiers of my company risked their lives, was located near the village of Lozovenka in the estate of a small farmstead that had long been burned down. Which of the major military commanders at that time remained at the headquarters, I did not know.

! The last known place of the headquarters of the 6th Army is the village of Rakitnoye, which is located 10 km west of Lozovenka.

292

Konstantin Bykov

The names of Timoshenko, Bagramyan, Gorodnyansky, Bobkin were mentioned, but I did not see any of them. Yes, and it doesn't matter! I was not up to them, and they were not up to me.

Air currents scattered paratroopers throughout the field. It was not possible to collect them with the help of signal whistles and flags, and to indicate the collection with signal rockets meant to cause aimed fire on oneself and on the headquarters. With great difficulty, with the help of the soldiers guarding the headquarters, it was nevertheless possible to gather the surviving paratroopers, carry out the seriously wounded and shelter them in the estate. They did not have time to bury the dead - from the direction of Lozovenka, fascist trucks appeared, from which soldiers dismounted, scattered across the steppe. The mortar and artillery shelling stopped. It was clear that the battle would be started by the fascist infantry, which continued to accumulate for a decisive offensive. While I and the commander of the commandant's platoon were considering a plan of all-round defense, foreman Efimkin lined up all those able to hold weapons, including the lightly wounded, divided the fighters, on my order, into two platoons, and appointed commanders of platoons and squads on my behalf. Time was pressing. The Nazis were about to go on the offensive.

- Comrade lieutenant, the company is formed! the foreman reported. "A total of eighty-four men, twenty of them lightly wounded.

Scary numbers! Of the one hundred and forty people, twenty were killed and thirty-six seriously wounded. There was not a single middle commander left, the lieutenants died - platoon commanders, junior political instructor Melkov, my deputy. What kind of guys they were! The company was thinned out, not having entered the battle yet. The mood of the fighters was nowhere worse ...

... The enemy launched an offensive. Clinging to the armored personnel carriers, the German submachine gunners walked almost at a run. There were many. Heard sharp, abrupt commands of the officers. The shelling immediately stopped, and, firing on the move from the stomach, the submachine gunners rushed to the attack. They were three hundred ... two hundred meters away. Only then did a single volley hit

293

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

our submachine guns and machine guns. The maneuver was repeated, as in a chess game. Fiery lines intertwined and pressed the Germans to the ground. Then the armored personnel carriers, leaving the infantry, turned ninety degrees and began to bypass us to the right and left ...

Lieutenant, get back! the sergeant shouted at me. But it was too late! Five steps away, a grenade spun, an explosion, and it was as if I had been scalded, as if boiling water had been splashed. I fell, almost reaching the machine gun, tried with all my might to reach it and could not. Nearby lay dead machine gunners — a Tajik and a Russian...

... Directly above me was a German soldier, aiming at me from a machine gun. At the front, I experienced many terrible minutes and days, when all living things were afraid of death, when fear overcame the mind... |

A sharp cry of "Halt! Niht shissen! saved my life. The soldier lowered his machine gun.

A German officer ran up to me and started asking me something. I didn't answer because I couldn't understand a single word. Then he, pointing a pistol at my chest, asked several times:

- An officer?

I said nothing again. We were not called officers in the Red Army at that time, we were simply red commanders. Lying nearby was my pistol, which I had not used to kill myself. Scared? No. The injury just knocked suicide out of my head...

The officer threw my pistol aside, then touched the lieutenant's cubes in the buttonholes, took off the order, the TRP badge, took out a Komsomol card from his breast pockets, an unsent letter to my mother, photographs, several fuses for grenades and a small cross ... Fuse officer you threw it away, and stuffed the rest back into my pockets and even did up the buttons. So I got into
captivity...

I did not expect mercy from the enemies, but the German orderlies bandaged me and carried me to the shore of a small

294

Konstantin Bykov

overgrown lake, where our wounded prisoners of war were already ...

... Some time passed, and a passenger car with German officers drove up to us, the prisoners. Two armored personnel carriers drove up next, which, moving the muzzles of machine guns from side to side, aimed their barrels at the prisoners. Machine gunners lined up on the sides. One of our frightened said:

"Looks like it's over, brothers!"

One of the prisoners started to run. The Germans made a noise, slowed down, and then, when the fugitive was about two hundred meters away, they cut him off with a machine gun.

- Are there any Jews? Come out! the German commanded in Russian.

Nobody came out.

Are there commissioners? Come out!

Again no one came out.

Are there commanders? Come out!

The junior lieutenant, commander of the commandant's platoon, came out. I decided not to go out, come what may, I was sure of my fighters - they would not be extradited.

All the prisoners were ordered to kneel down and take off their caps. I was half-lying, leaning on my good arm, my whole body ached, my chest ached, my hands were trembling. The officers slowly walked around us, carefully examining everyone, looking for Jews and commanders. The privates in our army, as a rule, had their hair cut, while the commanders wore their hair, so finding an officer among the soldiers of the Red Army was as easy as shelling pears - by an uncut head. In the army, I cut my hair bald, my blond forelock was demolished even before leaving for a military school. So the Germans passed by without paying any attention to me. Fortunately, no Jews, no commissars, no commanders were found among us. And the armored personnel carriers were still aiming at us with the muzzles of their machine guns. -

Junior lieutenant and foreman Efimkin, who was mistaken for a commander, was taken away in an armored personnel carrier. Us

295

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

searched, the wounded were left in place, and healthy prisoners were driven to bury our dead.

Finally, in the late afternoon, we were loaded into cars and taken to the outskirts of some village, past which columns of prisoners of war, soldiers and commanders of our armies, defeated in the Kharkov direction, were moving in an endless stream ...

And now the captive, exhausted, insulted Soviet army, staggering like a drunken man, slowly moves along the battered highway, pitted by war. Tears filled my eyes, and I didn't want to live anymore ...

- Look! Look! Ours are flying! someone shouted at the top of his voice.

I looked in the direction from which the roar of the engines was growing, and saw the planes that were flying in groups directly at us. There were many. Next to the big planes, fighter jets scurried briskly. Several red-star I-16s, "donkeys," as we called them, flew so low over us that we could see the faces of the pilots. The column of prisoners stopped.

- Ivan, lie down! Get down! shouted the German escorts, rushing away from the road.

But none of the prisoners lay down. Everyone, as one, took off their caps, froze, looking at the sky, as if they wanted to say: "Brothers, brothers, where were you before?"

The planes made a U-turn and bombed another road where enemy troops were moving. Clouds of smoke covered the steppe. And aside, dozens of Soviet and German fighters were spinning in a deadly battle, chasing and shooting each other; engines roared, large-caliber machine guns rattled sharply, downed planes fell to the ground with a howl and crackle. Explosions followed one after another.

When everything calmed down, some of the prisoners were driven to clear the broken road, littered, as they later said, with crumpled equipment and the corpses of enemy soldiers. And again, until the evening, an endless string of Soviet

Konstantin Bykov

prisoners of war. Sometimes the column stopped, rested a little, and again, to the screams and shots of the guards, Moved on. Of our group of prisoners, only the wounded remained on the spot, the rest were sent with the next column. It was as if they forgot about us, they didn't even guard us, and only occasionally soldiers and officers of the enemy jumped down from the stopped cars to stretch themselves, who approached us and looked at us with curiosity.

— Pan! Let me smoke, - the prisoners asked them, Reinforcing the words with gestures, - smoke ... tobacco, tobacco, you understand?

Who came up with the idea of addressing the Germans "pan", I don't know, maybe prisoners of the last war, but such an appeal was common in captivity everywhere and everywhere. Each German for us was not "master" and not "Herr", but precisely "pan". Some "heart-sick" Germans, Magyars, or Romanians held out cigarettes, and some even a piece of bread, but there were also those who, shouting incomprehensible curses, slapped their backs and showed a fig - they say, shish you, not smoke...

On the way we met another small column of prisoners of war. They looked terrible! Exhausted by the heat and the road, in dirty bloody bandages, the slaves slowly wandered under the abuse of the rabid guards. Walking past a half-grown pond, the prisoners reached for the water. They were thirsty. The Germans used bayonets and rifle butts to drive them away from the water. One prisoner managed to scoop up water in a pilot, but did not have time to get drunk - a shot rang out. Without a cry, the boy plunged into the water. He remained lying unburied, half covered with rotten water. And the column was driven on. Our CARRIAGES followed her... |

The prefabricated camp of prisoners of war, where we were brought, was a huge hummocky lowland, surrounded by several rows of barbed wire. There were tens, and maybe hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war under the open sky...» |

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The results of the Kharkov battle from the point of view of the Germans. "From the east, the enemy troops also tried to break through to meet their comrades," we continue to read the history of the 16th Panzer Division. — A heavy battle during these attempts took place in the bend of the Donets near Chepel, where the 384th Infantry Division (384.[.0.]) was stationed. However, all these attempts did not have any decisive success: significant parts of 20 rifle divisions, 7 cavalry divisions and 14 tank brigades were destroyed. Timoshenko was defeated. The Wehrmacht report claimed 240,000 prisoners; in the Russian operational report of the command of the ground forces, with surprising openness, 70,000 prisoners and 5,000 killed were said. The 16th Panzer Division captured 31,500 men, captured 224 guns, and knocked out 69 tanks. Her own losses amounted to 700

Human...

On June 2, the 16th Panzer Division left the battlefield near Lozovenka and Krutoyarka and redeployed 40 km to the north, into a large forest northwest of Skripaev and south of Chuguev. The soldiers found good quarters here. Beautiful houses with small front gardens were clean and well maintained, their inhabitants were amiable and helpful. The river called for bathing and fishing, the garden and meadows called for sunbathing; mail came from home, a good blow from the goulash cannon (Ocasskapope) filled the kitchen utensils to the brim. Bees buzzed in the lilacs"?

' We must pay tribute to German historians, including veterans of the Eastern Front, who wrote the histories of their divisions — telling us about the final results of major battles, they always make a reservation: "In the message of the Wehrmacht ..." Emphasizing the source of the data, the Germans do not take on responsibility for the accuracy of the figures that appeared in the era of Hitler and Goebbels. Surprisingly, the figures reported by the Wehrmacht during the war years were included in history books.

some former republics of the USSR as an indisputable fact, without indicating the date and source of publication of these figures.

2 Without disputing these data, let us ask ourselves the question: since the units of the 16th TD operated in the areas and mixed with other formations, where did they send the prisoners - to the points of collection of prisoners of neighboring divisions or to the points of their own division? That is, did the Germans not have a double count?

3 Iepwep lojvape. Sezsyshe 4er 16. Rap2er-Ogzyup 1939 - 1945.—\$. 91.

1st mountain division

Short story. The 1st mountain division was created in [1938] on the basis of the mountain brigade that existed since 1935. In 1939, the division took part in the Polish campaign and had an order to capture the Ukrainian city of Lvov, which temporarily belonged to Poland: , emblem of the 1st and the division again marched to the West. mountain division. In 1940, the 1st GD took part in the Western campaign, and in 1941, after Yugoslavia, it again appeared near Lvov. Her further combat path ran along the route: Uman, Donetsk, Mius, where the huntsmen met the new year 1942.

In 1942, the 1st Mountain Division took part in the Battle of Kharkov, in the campaign against the Caucasus and the Kuban, from where, in 1943, it was sent to renew and fight in the Balkans. In 1944-1945, the division was used in the Balkans and Hungary. At the very end of the war, it was renamed into the people's mountain division (1. Voss-Cervs-Pty1z1yup) and ended its existence by being taken prisoner.

The division included:

Seyte\$aveg-Keritepe 98 (mountain chasseur regiment)

Seygrz]azeg-Kegitep(99

Seygrz]areg-Keritepe 100 (departed for the 5th mountain division in 1940)

299

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Sego azeg-VaaShop 54 (mountain jaeger battalion, created in 1943)

Nosvse ge \$-Laveg-VayaShop 1 (high mountain chasseur battalion)

NosVzeBi?\$-Lavegue-VabaShop 2

SeYg2\$-AiYAgip25-AePipz 54 (mountain reconnaissance battalion)

Kgadzs Wi hep-AMe! Ypres 54 (motorcycle rifle battalion)

Waaang-ASH. 54 (scooter battalion)

Sebi25;-ACShepe-Keritepe 79 (mountain artillery regiment)

Sebi? 25-Raptegab \ evg-AMEPipae 44 (mountain anti-tank division)

SeBir5-MaspisShep-AeTsPiph 54 (mountain communications battalion)

Seytrzaer-Re!4erza (7-BaaShop 54 (mountain-jäger reserve battalion)

Sebeers]areg-Ee4erza7-WaaShop 79

Fluff. MasrzslibReigeg 54 (divisional supply department)

SeB25-Tgazeg-VaaShop 54 (mountain pack battalion)

Kper5geyaprepp-Seblg2\$-Tgazeg-VazhaShop 54 (mountain pack battalion of prisoners of war!)

From October 1940 to December 1942, the division was commanded by General Hubert Lanz (Nibetz Gap7).

1st Mountain Division on the eve of the Battle of Kharkov. Since October 1941, the 1st Mountain Division, having finished the battles in the area of Donetsk and Makeevka, was sent to the Mius Front. By January 1942, the companies of the division had an average of 44 people. On February 18, rangers began to be transferred to the section of the Mackensen group, which was located in the area of the Samara River - on the southern border of the Barvenkovsky salient. Here, reinforced with tanks, the 1st Mountain Division took part in fierce battles that lasted until mid-March.

,
Perhaps the translation is not correct.

300

Konstantin Bykov

Thus, by the beginning of the Battle of Kharkov in May, the 1st mountain division ended up in the 3rd army motorized corps of Mackensen. As part of this corps, before the start of the battle, entered and occupied positions from east to west:

- 100th Light Infantry Division, reinforced by the Reinforced Croatian Infantry Regiment;
- 14th Panzer Division;
- 1st mountain division, to which "several more Italian battle groups were brought up"! (judging by the photographs from the history of the 1st city, we are talking about the Barbo group).

1st mountain division in the Kharkov battle. On May 17 Mackensen's 3rd Panzer Corps launched an offensive against Barvenkovo. The combat operations of the [th mountain division, which provided the left, western, flank of the corps, consisted of the following stages:

May 17th. Front breakthrough. The 1st Mountain Division, advancing on Barvenkovo, was on the left flank of Mackensen's 3rd Corps. The construction of the [th gd itself on that day was as follows:

- on the right flank of the division was its 99th regiment, which was advancing from Aleksandrovka on Samara to Barvenkovo through Fedorovka (the enemy was the 341st rifle division);
- in the center of the combat order of the 1st GD was its 98th regiment, the axis of attack of which ran from Sofiyivka on Samara to Gavrilovka (west of Barvenkovo) through Bogdanovka (the enemy was the 35th Rifle Division);
- the left-flank part of the 1st mountain division was the Italian battle group Barbo, which, judging by the map of Lanz from the history of the 1st city, was thrown back by the Soviet 341st rifle division to its original positions in Samara. However, in all likelihood, Lanz mixed up the positions of the Soviet divisions. To heaven-

| 5. von Mackensen From the Bug to the Caucasus. - M.: AST Publishing House LLC: Tranzitkniga LLC, 2004. - P. 295.

301

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

``
Vagieplo b An deg 5<ataga> <

Heh Znaste wop Wagmeik / o . \$32\sha,a 17.5 1942 B

SLAVE! exapog si E 7-9 dy Ot VisPAeg .Rskeg

p "I'm a Pateloma.

/Vagro

{Zaipeg}

22 Mazavka U -

VRU memory folder

1st mountain division in the Kharkov battle.

one of the actions of the Barbeau group and the 98th Mountain Jaeger Regiment occupied the defense of the 351st Rifle Division.

May 18 - 21. Defense of the flank of the corps. The 1st mountain division took up defense with a front to the northwest, from Sofiyivka in Samara to Barvenkovo. The opponents of the division, from north to south, were units of the 341st Rifle Division, which retreated here, units of the 70th and 62nd Cavalry Divisions of the 2nd Cavalry Corps and the 14th Guards Rifle Division, which were urgently transferred to this sector, and also held on their the position of Samara 351st rifle division. Tra

302

Konstantin Bykov

The gist of the situation was that the 14th Panzer Division moved further north at that time, but without tanks, for which crossings across Sukhoi Torets had not yet been built. There, north of Barvenkovo, except for one regiment of the 333rd Rifle Division and the remnants of the 106th and 341st Rifle Divisions that retreated from Samara, there were no Soviet units. While the Soviet reserves were breaking down the defenses of the 1st GD, the Germans built crossings, and the 14th Panzer Division poured into the uncovered rear of our troops. In the following days, the 1st Mountain Division occupied its former positions, its front, due to a slight advance of the right flank to the west from Barvenkovo, reoriented strictly to the west - towards the 57th Army.

May 22 - 24. In reserve. The throat of the bag, in which the 57th Army found itself, was narrowed by the blow of the 16th Panzer Division. By May 22, this bag had shrunk so much that the 1st GD became "superfluous", and it was taken to the corps reserve in the Grushevakhia area. On the same day, the encirclement ring around the 6th Army and Bobkin's army group was closed, in which the 57th Army, squeezed into it from the south, also found itself. Being in reserve

kr i

v -

Italian brigadier general Barbo (left).

303

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

1st mountain division before the attack on Barvenkovo on May 17, 1942

3rd Panzer Corps!, the 1st Mountain Division concentrated in the Volvenkovo-Petrovskoye-Protopopovka area. To the west of the mountain rangers were the 23rd, 3rd, 16th TD, 60th MDI 389th Infantry Division. task

all these connections were to prevent a breakthrough from the boiler to the east. To the east of the 1st mountain division, the positions of the 14th and 384th infantry divisions were occupied. Their task was to prevent the release of the boiler from the east. Located between these groups, the 1st GD could be quickly deployed in the right direction.

May 25th. The beginning of the fight against breakthroughs. However, it would be more advantageous for the Germans to have a more mobile formation as a "fire brigade" than a mountain division. "Therefore," reports the commander of the 3rd Panzer Corps, "on the afternoon of May 25, the 1st Mountain Division had to go on the offensive through the positions of the 60th Motorized Division in order to free it from the fighting as the first (only) mobile unit. But the offensive of the mountain rangers ran into an attempt to break through huge

and: by order of the commander of the 3rd corps dated May 30, 1942, this corps, the former army motorized. already called tank. -

304

Konstantin Bykov

masses of the enemy, who simply rolled over the thin barrier front of the 60th motorized division, which covered one of the "holes" formed during the offensive, and rolled further to the east. Damn difficult situation!

They managed to get out of this situation, according to the same Mackensen, with the help of aviation - the Soviet units that broke through were stopped before they approached the eastern defense line of the corps.

It's a shame ... After all, the direction of the breakthrough was chosen very well - all the tank formations of the Germans (23rd, 3rd, 16th and 14th TD) were located to the north. In front of the Soviet troops that broke through the 60th and 1st divisions, only the 384th infantry division remained, the front of which was stretched along the Seversky Donets for 15-20 km ...

However, the time has come to give the floor to the direct participant in the battles from the German side.

"The attack on Barvenkovo was scheduled for May 17th. Early in the morning, at 03.50, the huntsmen launched an offensive," says Hubert Lanz, commander of the 1st Mountain Division. - To the north of Aleksandrovka, the Bukhner strike group (99th regiment) broke through well-equipped winter positions and struck from both sides of the road to Barvenkovo.

The enemy, the 341st and 351st Rifle Divisions, was desperately defending themselves in their numerous, one after the other trenches. In an attack on one such trench near Fedorovka, our cavalier of the Knight's Cross, Sergeant Major Gefele (NA@e), was killed. But the impulse of our offensive was not stopped.

1. von Mackensen From the Bug to the Caucasus. - M.: AST Publishing House LLC: Tranzitkniga LLC, 2004. - P. 304.

2 The 341st Rifle Division of the 9th Army and the 351st Rifle Division of the 57th Army (Colonel N.U. Gursky) were, as Glants writes, "many non-Russians" (Slaph Dama M. KpagKou 1942. Apaotu oga Mitsagu O! {5azer. MU: Zagredop, 1998. - R. 98, 100). At the time of formation, at the end of 1941, the 341st SD (Colonel A.I. Shchagin) consisted of Stalingrad workers and Don Cossacks, the 351st SD consisted of Cossacks who had previously served in the Red Army (Ryabyshev D.I. The first year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - P. 126). Both divisions were distinguished by discipline. Obviously, after the winter battles, they were replenished with recruits who had not been fired upon and had not previously served in the army.

305

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

After the capture of Barvenkovo, the settlements in the Sukhoy Tortsya valley were cleared from the enemy. The entire area between Samara and the Barvenkovo-Lozovaya road was taken with fighting. |

On Trinity Sunday, May 24, we head north, and the next night we are brought into action between the 16th Panzer and 60th Motorized Divisions on both sides of Lozovenka. The situation was as follows: when on the second day of the offensive of the southern wing of the 17th Army, namely on May 18, Izyum was reached, Gimoshenko, in order not to become cut off, launched his own attack. But the mass of his troops south of Kharkov and west of Izyum was in a sack and was already surrounded on all sides in the Bereki valley. At the same time, it was about the main forces of the Red 57th and 6th armies, approximately 7th infantry or tank divisions, 8th motorized brigades. This monstrous mass of troops, compressed in a narrow space, intended to break out in order to link up with the Russian front located approximately 40 km away on the other side of the Donets.

Preventing this breakthrough, together with other troops, became a new task for the division. This led to dramatic events. A few hours later, after the 1st Mountain Division had taken up its positions in a fairly wide arc, on the night of May 25 to May 26, the first eruption began. With a monstrous howl, in the night illuminated by flares, under the sharp commands of their officers and commissars, closely packed Russian columns poured into our positions.

We opened furious defensive fire.

The enemy columns turn to the north, stumble upon the same fire there, but, despite this, break through our thin line, kill and stab everything that stands across their path. Stumbling over the corpses, they run another couple of hundred meters and finally fall under our fire. Everything that remains alive rolls back into the Bereka valley. Some time later, already at dawn, our shock groups (505\$gtarr\$) were sent to the valley. However

306

Konstantin Bykov

they did not succeed in moving far forward, everything was teeming with Russians there. It turned out that those who worked on us at night and now covered the entire battlefield - an indescribable terrible picture - were only a part of them. The cauldron has not yet been eliminated, and tens of thousands of those who did not want to surrender were below Bereka. The attack of our tanks confirmed this impression. They were attacked by the emerging T-34s. It didn't look like surrender.

When, in the evening twilight, a huge Russian aircraft flew into the boiler - probably with a decisive order - we prepared to defend against further attacks. A terrifying scream and roar heralded a new eruption. In the flickering light of the flares, you could see them coming. In a dense mass, the front ranks are closely closed, accompanied by tanks.

This time the enemy advances in several wedges along the entire front - in the last despair, for the most part pointlessly drunk. Like robots, apparently insensitive to our fire, they invaded here and there in our defensive line. Their tracks were terrible here. With skulls cut open, unrecognizably mutilated by caterpillars, we found our comrades who defended themselves until the very last moment on this road of Death. Of course, the path of this eruption was not far.

By the next morning, the encirclement battle near Bereka was over. Over 27,000 prisoners, almost 100 tanks and almost the same number of guns fell into our hands. However, our losses were bitter. Since May 17, the beginning of the offensive on Barvenkovo, the division has lost 431 killed and over 1,300 wounded.

After those deadly nights that no one will ever forget, we had one quiet day to clear the battlefield and bury our fallen. Then we moved to

north. On the front deployed near the Donets, on both sides of Balakleya and down to Chepel, was deployed

307

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Cemetery of the 98th regiment in the state farm of the village of Stepok.

defensive position. Here we remained until the sun-STANDING.

While we were resting, orders were given by the main army command for the final preparations for

Mountains of Soviet weapons near Bereka.

308

Konstantin Bykov

The transition of the 1st mountain division through the Seversky Donets.

the mentioned summer offensive on the Southern Front. We now belonged to the 11th Corps (Strekker) of the 17th Army (von Stulpnagel) of Army Group A (Liszt).

Well prepared, early in the morning of June 22 — the anniversary of the Oleshichs (Oeztus)! - we launched an attack and soon reached the Donets between Zaliman and Savintsy. As the head of Baumgartner's 2nd Battalion, 98th Regiment rushed over the bridge, he flew into the air along with the brave rangers. However, then it was possible to break the ignition wire and repulse the attempt of the Russian demolition detachment to blow up the remains of the bridge "...

\Oleshichi is a settlement (now in Poland), from which on June 22, 1941, the 1st mountain division started the war.

? Gapyo SiBem. SeygrUAreg. Ge 1. Sebgezagyon 1935 - 1945. Uenna? Nap\$-Neptie Ro47op. Wad Maipait, 1954. - \$. 153-156.

369TH CROATIAN REINFORCED INFANTRY REGIMENT

Flag of the 369th regiment.

310

Short story. Since April 1941, when Slavko Kvaternik, a former officer of the Austro-Hungarian army, a Yugoslav colonel and a conspiratorial Ustaše from Zagreb, was proclaimed, and Hitler and Mussolini recognized the Independent State of Croatia (MON), it began to be created and three types of troops were created at once:

- Croatian housekeeping (Nguia Ko 4oto- 6gap \$ (uo) - the official Croatian Armed Forces;

— Ustashskaya voynitsa (Ozab\$Ka voitssa) — military formations based on Ustasha (fascist-terrorist sep

Konstantin Bykov

ratist movement for the exit of Croatia from Yugoslavia'), something like the Waffen SS;

- German and Italian military units from Croatian and Bosnian volunteers, which were part of the Armed Forces of Germany and Italy ..

The German reinforced 369th Infantry Regiment (Croatian) belonged to the third type of military formations we named, where the word in brackets meant where and from whom it was formed.

Gegyaatle; [p1atepte-Katet: 369 (Ktoa1.), also known as Rogaske riCoupie (Reinforced 369th Infantry Regiment) — was born on July 16, 1941. The soldiers and officers of the 369th Infantry Regiment, initially consisting of 3895 people, were, as it should be in the Wehrmacht, equipped with German uniforms and had German insignia. 1st battalion of the regiment

ÿIn 1934, the Ustaše (rebels or insurgents) assassinated the Yugoslav King Alexander Ti of the French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou. Having taken power in Croatia in April 1941 and announcing the creation of the MON, the Ustashe killed about 290,000 of the 1.9 million Serbs living in the country, almost all of the 40,000 Jews and 30,000 Gypsies. According to other sources (Alexander Ler, Lothar Rendulich, Hermann Neubacher, Ernst Fick and Messenbach), the Ustasha killed from 350 to 700 thousand people only before 1944. "The scale of the genocide in Croatia forced even Mussolini to grant asylum in Italy to Serbs and Jews fleeing the Ustashe regime. The Nazis also criticized the Ustashe for the Serbian genocide, but they did not take practical steps to stop the terror," reports Ure a.

2 "Many Croats," writes Alen Milic, "refused to serve in the Armed Forces of the Independent State, but willingly offered their services to Germany and Italy. Croats served in all branches of the German Wehrmacht, in the SS detachments and the SS police. The following formations of the German Wehrmacht were completed by Croatian volunteers: 369th Reinforced Infantry Regiment, 369th "Devil" Division, 373rd "Tiger" DIVISION, 392nd "Blue Division", Croatian Air Legion, Croatian Naval Legion, 13th SS Mountain Division Napazsvag, 23rd SS Mountain Division "Kata", 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Police Regiments "Croatia", Police Antitank Company "Croatia" and Gendarmerie Division "Chorva" - tia. In addition, two formations - the Light Transport Brigade and the Croatian Legion - fought on the side of Italy during the Second World War" (see the material by Alen Milic "Croatian volunteers in the German Wehrmacht in World War II" in the collection "Crusade against Russia" . - M .: Yauza, 2005). |

311

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

was staffed by Bosnian Muslims, the second and third were Croatian and Bosnian Catholics (according to other sources, one company of each battalion was Bosnian Muslim, and the other two companies were Croatian-Catholic). The origin of the regiment was emphasized by a sleeve patch with the image of Poaves Anne PAV of the Croatian "chess" shield with red and white squares and the inscription NguaKa. The same emblem was applied to the helmet. Since the "decals" on the helmets helped Russian snipers aim better, the Germans in 1942 banned this kind of excess.

Simultaneously with the formation of the 369th regiment, its training battalion was created, which was located in Stockerau (Austria). After the formation of the 369th regiment was completed, it was sworn in to the Führer, head commander!, the Reich and the Independent State of Croatia (Megau15pa Ogkhaua NguabKa).

_ On August 15, 1941, after three weeks of additional training, the regiment was sent to the Eastern Front. At that time it consisted of three infantry battalions and an "artillery section" armed with 105 mm guns. Each infantry battalion included three infantry companies, a machine gun company, an anti-tank company and a supply company. It was because of the presence of artillery in the regiment that it was called reinforced. However, in our sources

the structure of the "artillery department" of the regiment is not named. According to alternative sources, the 369th regiment consisted of three battalions

Poglavnik (leader, leader, leader) ^\ - the title of Ante Pavelich (Asche Raue[s]) - the political leader of the Ustashe and the highest real state leader of the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War (nominally the country was ruled by King Tomislav P).

312

Konstantin Bykov

talons, one machine-gun company, one anti-tank company and three artillery batteries.

On the Eastern Front, the 369th Regiment numbered between 5,000 and 6,300 men and operated as part of the German 100th Light Infantry Division. From August 1941 to February 1943, the 369th Reinforced Infantry Regiment (also known as the PetkOI Infantry , . the title of the Croatian Legion - NguaKa

division, as part of Gez) went from the Dniester to the Volga, which was where he died. Kremenchug and the first heavy 369th Croatian battle near Poltava (09/26/1941), anti-Regiment. partisan operations, the battle near Kharkov in May 1942, Voronezh, Kalach and Stalingrad, into which the 369th regiment entered at 23:30 on September 26, 1942, and from which it never left — these are the main milestones of his combat biography.

The 100th Light Infantry Division (100. |1115101), with which the Croatian regiment traveled along the battle roads, was formed in October 1940 and initially consisted

from:

- two (and not three, as in a regular division) infantry regiments, the 54th and 227th: shashchepe-Keziteti 54 and shashchepe-Ke21-tep {227;

- 83rd artillery regiment: ATSShepe-Keritegi 83;

- 100th Field Reserve Battalion: Her@erza{7-BaaShop 100:

- 100th anti-tank battalion: Rap2epaeeg- Ae! Piph 100;

- 1000th reconnaissance battalion: AiYAgap \$\$ - AePipae 100;

- 100th sapper battalion: P1osher-Badashop 100;

- 100th communications battalion: 01u1 \$ 101p5 - Maspis Schep-AShche1 - mis 100;

Emblem of the 100th

The regiment was introduced into the 100th division of the 17th Army of the Army Group "South" in the Ukrainian village of Nadezhdovka on October 9, 1941.

313

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

- 100th divisional rear department: O1 \ 1 \$ 10p5 - Maspzsnibayteg 100.

Since October 1941, after the introduction of the 369th regiment, reinforced by artillery, the 100th light infantry division remained light only in its name.

From the moment of formation and during the May battles near Kharkov, the 369th regiment was commanded by Colonel Ivan Markul (riKowK [uap Maki]), and the 100th light infantry division was commanded by Lieutenant General Werner Zanne! (SepegaCeschape UTerpeg Zappe).

From the autumn of 1941 to the spring of 1942, the reinforced 369th regiment of the 100th light infantry division was part of:

- 55th Army Corps of the 17th Army (October 1941, Poltava region). From January 6, 1941, the corps was commanded by General of Infantry Ervin Virov (Sepega | 4eg [1ashchepe Egmsh Mego \) ?;
- 11th Army Corps of the 6th Army (November, Kharkov region). This corps was commanded from October 6 to December 1941 by General of Infantry Evgeny Ott (Sepetga! Deg [n#apepe Eizep OTs), and on December 10, 1941, by General of Infantry Joachim von Kortzfleisch (Sepega! Deg Aschepe Loast vop Kots2Ye15sv);`
- the reserve of the 1st Panzer Army, Field Marshal Ewald von Kleist (December 1941, Mius Front);
- 14th Motorized Army Corps of the 1st Tank Army (January 1942, Taganrog region). Since September 1939, the corps was commanded by General of Infantry Gustav von Wietersheim (Sepega! 4er aschepe Siz\$au wop Umshegvet);
- 3rd Motorized Army Corps of the 1st Tank Army (February 1942, Taganrog). From January 1941 until the end of March 1942 the corps was commanded by General of Cavalry Eberhard von Mackensen

! General Zanne commanded the division from October 1940. He died in Soviet captivity in 1952.

2 The corps commanders are indicated for the period when the 369th REGIMENT was part of the corps.

314

Konstantin Bykov

MasKepzep), then - General of the Tank Forces Leo Geyer von Schweplenburg (Sepega | deg Raptetsgarre Geo Seug wop esp / errebigwe).

From here on, considering the history of the 369th regiment, we will rely on the work of Dragan Klyakich "Ustash-Domobran Legion near Stalingrad" ...

It is obvious that in this work trophy materials kept by Marshal A.I. Eremenko:

"During our second meeting, the conversation turned to the decisive battle of World War II," Dragan Klyakic writes of his meeting with Eremenko. – And then the veteran and the first soldier of that front showed me one of his most precious military trophies – a belt with a pistol, which once belonged personally to Field Marshal von Paulus, commander of the 6th Army, "invincible", as the Fuhrer called it. Nikita Khrushchev, then a member of the Military Council of the Stalingrad Front, presented this trophy to Eremenko for his successful command of operations on the Volga.

The most interesting things were collected in the vast expanse of the Battle of Stalingrad. Among the trophies there were many different packages, records, diaries, secret orders that were captured from the Germans and Italians; official reports, tactical topographic maps, unusual souvenirs looted by the Germans in the area from Paris to Belgrade and from Athens to Stalingrad.

Yeremenko also showed me a pile of documents from one of the highest officers of the Wehrmacht, which were called materials on the "history of the creation of the thousand-year-old Reich."

- Flip through all those papers! the marshal suggested to me. — They are written in German, Italian and Romanian. Look patiently," he added, "you will find there also a notebook written in your language...

And really...

Ogagap Kuayus. IbazKo-aotobgapzKa 1evTsa ro4 Z4alpegadot. Apoi \$ Sesages. Khazgeb, 1979.

2 Oganap K]ax.5. 6.

315

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

There were documents of the Ustash-Domobran Legion, the "Reinforced 369th Infantry Regiment," as this unit was officially called. The legionnaires of this regiment took their last battle on the banks of the Volga, in the Stalingrad steppes, where this unit died. Among the fallen Ustash-Domobran troops, many were awarded the highest German awards, iron crosses, Ustash medals and shamrocks.' Because of the cruelty, violence and robberies perpetrated by the legion, the Ukrainian peasants called it the "Devil's Regiment". Pavelic liked this name. And when in 1943 he formed new formations, then, following the example of the "Stalingrad legionnaires", he assigned the name "Devil's" to one of the new divisions, thereby transferring to it the "Stalingrad banner". This division did not lag behind its inseparable "forerunner - legionnaires", which the peoples of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina remembered with blood.

Tutma let us try to clarify the origin of the "devilish" name of the 369th Croatian regiment and its successor - the 369th Croatian division. In German and English sources, these military units are indeed called "devilish". However, it seems to us that if the authors of this name were indeed Ukrainian

Croatian shamrock.

The shamrock is an order.

The 2369th division was used against the partisans of Yugoslavia. Dgahap Claius. ObazKo-dotobhapka 1er ca genus ZaPegadota. Atsriz (Sezages. Havteb, 1979. -p.7.

316

Konstantin Bykov

Indian peasants, then nothing diabolical was actually meant.

The fact is that the Serbo-Croatian word "enemy" means and is accordingly translated into German, English, Russian and Ukrainian as "damn, devil". However, the word "enemy" in the Russian language and the word "enemy" in the Ukrainian language, having a common root with the Croatian (to conjure - to conjure), does not mean at all a "devil" or "devil", but simply an "opponent". When the Ukrainians called the 369th Regiment an enemy one (in Ukrainian - a fortune-teller), this meant that the regiment belonged to the enemy, and not to hell, as the Slavic brothers mistakenly thought.

"New Year 1942 found the regiment stationed in Vasilievka, a bare Ukrainian village in the middle of an empty snowy plain. The icy wind knocked the legionnaires off their feet and interfered with patrols, the thermometer showed minus 35 degrees Celsius. Everyone sat around the fires, the flames of which did not warm, - Dragan Klyakich tells us?. - The commander of the regiment, Colonel Markul, congratulated his soldiers on the New Year: "We are on the Eastern Front, as the best soldiers of the Independent State of Croatia. Gadot 5rgeshi!!" May this holiday illuminate you, warriors, with extraordinary goodness! With us now mentally are the chief and the military commander

Pavelic and personally the leader of the great Reich, Adolf Hitler. Sieg Heil Fuhrer! The coming 1942 will be our best year. It will be inscribed in gold letters in the history of the NDH, just as

like a glorious army

TI.I. Tolstoy. Serbo-Croatian-Russian Dictionary. - M.: "Russian language", 1976.

During the Second World War, the Croatian fascists, tormented by a typical disease of the separatist Slavs, tried to prove that the Croats are not Slavs who came from Galicia, but descendants of the Goths, a Germanic tribe.

3 Oganap K]ax . e. 51.

ÿ The official Croatian-Ustaše slogan, meaning: "Always ready for the Motherland"

317

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

great Reich and we, accomplices of the great German and our victory! Happiness to you in the New Year, MY WARRIORS!"

About the lofty morale of the military personnel of the regiment, on the basis of recently

Poglavnik in the 369th regiment. great independence, witness

dredge led

Mr. Klyakich entry from the diary of the commander (senior sergeant) of the 369th regiment of Khabiyants (Nabtsapes):

"The command of the regiment received a Dictionary of Military Terminology from Zagreb. Praise God, the terminology of the former Yugoslav army has been exterminated from official use. It is now accepted that:

rodoysi will be called - dobashK (non-commissioned officer, sergeant),

adpiga! \$ K 6go4 (admiral ship) - adptta [5Ka hell,

afucape - robot k,

akiut onsg - death1 saztK!,

ta]og - Bo,

atba \$ zadog - roKizag (parliamentary, delegate),

aglua - tortapa,

arp1 \$ I'm gepega| - hepega! re\$aSua?,

a (tsShegas - {orshK (artilleryman).

And I myself have now become - 'yurshS add K, and not aiSchegts\$K! rhodosi,

wow K! p150] - now called zatokge\$ (revolver, automatic pistol),

BayoaTsop - bot,

run (artillery battery) - {rouzKo KSha5youo,

'
In Croatian military terminology, the word "active" means the same as the WORD "Active" in our military terminology, in the expression, for example, "active army". \

2 Foot (foot army) - infantry. General of the foot (infantry) - a rank equivalent to the German general of the infantry.

318

Konstantin Bykov

God sings - Bofa Bodot (bayonet fight),

Sea (couple) - zabatsa (hundred, that is - a company),

deseag - goal K (squad leader),

dezeipa - go] (swarm, branch),

Chueg2Tsa - sha@sa,

ge7egua - ribsha

votiska 4peupisa (soldier's daily money) - ta74a...

...We have our own army, our own terminology, our own traditions...".

Exhausted from idleness in Vasilievka, in "a kind of Ukrainian desert", and worried that the war would end without them, the soldiers of the 369th regiment cheered themselves up with songs - "The trumpet calls us to fight for our people!" - and complained: "There are no railways here. We will lose the last atom of energy by walking from village to village..."

Indeed, after the advent of the new, 1942, the regiment was ordered to move forward, to the north, and on January 27, walking from village to village, the 369th Infantry Regiment finally arrived in Stalino. There was a railway in Stalino, which caused a surge of humor and hope among the soldiers: "Many of us will not even notice how quickly we will arrive in Moscow. Get your uniform ready, cut your hair, wear orders on your chest. Parade of the 369th regiment on Red Square! Poglavnik will reward all of us with the Order of King Zvonimir! ›

However, the entries in the "War Diary" for these days were not so cheerful: "Studeno! And an impassable path

After Stalino (Donetsk), the 1st battalion of the regiment was stationed in the village of Krivorozhye, the 2nd battalion - in Grishino, the 3rd - in Selidovka. These settlements are located approximately 100-150 km north-west of the Mius Front?, where the 369th regiment wintered. Thus, instead of Moscow, the regiment

Ogagap K]akKs.5.52.

2 The Germans called the "Mius-Front" their defense along the Mius River, where they entrenched themselves after on November 29, 1941, Soviet troops, having thwarted their attempt to break through to the Caucasus, drove them out of Rostov.

319

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

relocated closer to the Barvenkovo-Lozovsky bridgehead of the Red Army (south of Kharkov), fighting for the unintentional! whose formation took place in January 1942. The southern edge of this gigantic bridgehead was the Samara River, along which the reinforced 369th Regiment would soon take up defense in the area of the village of Aleksandrovka.

Combat operations of the 369th regiment on the eve of the Kharkov battle. In the period between the watch on the Mius Front and the occupation of the starting line for the encirclement of Soviet troops near Kharkov, i.e. From January to May 1942, the 369th regiment, together with the 100th infantry regiment, became part of the group of the commander of the 3rd motorized corps von Mackensen and took part in the "Barvenkovo-Lozovsky counteroffensive operation of the Wehrmacht". According to Mackensen himself, the group was created specifically in order to "stop the enemy breakthrough that followed from Izyum in the general direction to the southwest and, after that, in a counteroffensive, push the enemy back"?. We are talking about the unsuccessful Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya offensive operation of the Soviet troops, which, due to exhaustion of forces, was terminated on January 31, 1942.

The purpose of the offensive of the Red Army on January 18-31, 1942 was the defeat of the southern German grouping, the liberation of Donbass and access to the Dnieper, but not the formation of a bridgehead. Subsequently, this not entirely successful offensive operation was named Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya.

2 From the Bug to the Caucasus / Per. with him. - M.: AST Publishing House LLC: Tranzitkniga LLC, 2004. Contents: [X Army Corps in the Eastern Campaign of 1941 / G. Geyer. From the Bug to the Caucasus: III Panzer Corps in the campaign against Soviet Russia in 1941-1942 / E. von Mackensen. S. 285.

3 The goal of the January 1942 Kharkov offensive operation of the troops of the South-Western direction was the defeat of the main Wehrmacht grouping east of the Dnieper, the liberation of Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye. Subsequently, based on what was actually achieved, this operation was named Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya, which does not correspond to the actual intentions of the Soviet command for the period of the development of the operation plan. The end date of the operation - January 31 - is also conditional. This is the date when an offensive operation turned into a defensive one. In fact, the fighting went on throughout February and ended, also unsuccessful, in the March Kharkov offensive operation.

320

Konstantin Bykov

The von Mackensen group, which was formed at the end of January 1942 and whose headquarters was located in Stalino, INCLUDED:

- 100th Ipd with the 369th "Lyavolsky" reinforced infantry regiment;
- 14th Panzer Division;
- 11th Army Corps (298th Infantry Division, 1st Romanian Infantry Division, 113th Infantry Division);
- and "other numerous small and hastily assembled military units, among which were Italians, Hungarians, Croats and Walloons.

The units assembled in the von Mackensen group took up defensive positions on the 150 km Petropavlovka-Stepanovka-Grishino front. It was a kind of southern appendix of the Barvenkovsky bridgehead. The bottom of this appendix was in the south - in Grishino. Its northwestern node was Petropavlovka, and its northeastern node was Stepanovka. This appendix during the Barvenkovo-Lozovo offensive operation was created by the 5th Cavalry Corps, Major General A.A. Grechko. After the capture of Barvenkovo - and here was the rear base of the 17th German Army - the 5th Corps was deployed in a southerly direction - towards the Samara River. Liberation of Barvenkovo and the subsequent advance towards Samara and further to the south 5th Corps

performed as part of:

- 34th Cavalry Division (Colonel A.N. Inauri);
- 60th cd (Colonel G.N. Perekrestov, a division of the Don Cossacks);

- 79th cd (Colonel V.S. Golovsky, multinational division from Central Asia);
- 351st Rifle Division (Colonel N.U. Gursky, a division of the Don Cossacks);
- 130th Tank Brigade (Colonel E.G. Pushkin);

' Obviously, they are referring to the Walloons - a people in Belgium who speak the Walloon dialect of French.

14 The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 321

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

- 4th Guards Tank Brigade! (Major General of Tank Troops G.I. Kuzmin).

To the left, that is, to the east, on the 5th KK, the 1st Cavalry Corps under the command of Major General F.A. advanced south. Parkhomenko (during the Civil War, he was a regiment commander in the 1st Cavalry Army). His body included:

- 35th Cavalry Division, Colonel S.F. Sklyarov;
- 56th Cavalry Division Major General L.D. Ilyina;
- 68th Cavalry Division of Colonel N.A. Kirichenko;
- 15th tank brigade of major general of tank troops (according to other sources, colonel) M.V. Kolosov;
- 255th Infantry Division, Major General I.T. Zamertseva.

In the course of the raid to the south, both cavalry corps with their attached units collided with the Mackensen group, the 100th Ipd and the units of the 369th Croatian Reinforced Regiment scattered throughout its regiments and battalions.

If Grechko's troops had succeeded in capturing Krasnoarmeisk, and Parkhomenko's troops had succeeded in advancing to the Konstantinovka area, to the rear of the enemy's Artemov grouping and blocking it from the west, then the days of the Germans in the Donbass would have been numbered.

However, things didn't go as planned...

After the war, A.A. Grechko got into a difficult situation. On the one hand, he had to write that the operation failed due to a typical and predictable problem for the advancing troops - the lack of supplies. On the other hand, was it necessary to note the significant role of political agents and commissars? in the organization of the supply of the troops that escaped forward:

| 4th Guards tbr. until January 24, 1942 was the 132nd brigade.

In the armies that carried out the Barvenkovo-Lozovo operation, there was a large shortage of political personnel who could solve important rear and front tasks. The commander of the troops of the 57th army, in the zone of which the 5th and 1st cavalry corps operated, D.I. Ryabyshev stopped party workers evacuating from Ukraine and offered them to join the political agencies of his army. Ryabyshev confiscated vehicles from those who refused (D.I. Ryabyshev, op. cit. — p. 129).

"Difficult, downright unbearable conditions were for the offensive, especially for the cavalry. But, despite the fierce cold, an acute shortage of ammunition and food, the cavalry moved forward. Under these conditions, political agencies, party and Komsomol organizations provided especially great assistance to the command... When there were difficulties in supplying units with ammunition, fuel, food and fodder, employees of higher political agencies immediately took measures to provide the troops with everything they needed", - writes A.A. Grechko and quotes the award sheet for awarding the Order of the Red Banner to the Deputy Head of the Political Directorate of the Southern Front, Brigadier Commissar L.I. Brezhnev for the fact that "at a difficult moment, when the roads were covered with snow and the cars fell behind, he managed to organize an uninterrupted supply of troops with everything necessary" ". This was the first military award of the future General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and, probably, fair. In any case, he really was in the area of combat operations, tried to arrange the supply of troops and, together with the future Minister of Defense of the USSR, fell under a raid by German dive bombers, only miraculously escaped. killed.

However, the help of the political agencies was not so effective as to save the situation. On January 28, unable to withstand the German strike from Grishino, the 60th cd began to withdraw. Following her, the entire 5th kk, having no ammunition, withdrew to Krivoy Rog. The next day, January 29, both tank brigades of Grechko's corps stopped and did not take part in the battle, the opponents of which, according to Bagramyan, were units of the 100th and 68th Infantry Divisions, and according to Grechko himself, units of the 101st th and 68th PDS 30 - 40 tanks.

Things were no better at Parkhomenko's corps: "The regiments of the 1st Cavalry Corps and the 255th Infantry Division during January 26 and 27, with 36-degree frost and constant

Grechko A.A. War years. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1976. - S. 117.

323

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

blizzard, repeatedly attacked the enemy defending the line Yavlenskoe, Shavrovo!', but had no success. Artillery and mortars were left without shells, and only six tanks remained in service in the 15th tank brigade. On January 27, the 68th Cavalry Division resumed its attack on Yavlenskaya. Commander of the 194th Cavalry Regiment, Major N.V. Glinberg led the squadrons to attack. Horsemen broke into this settlement. In hand-to-hand combat, Major Glinberg died a heroic death, but the regiment entrenched itself in the western part of Yavlenskaya. Advancing on Yakovlevka, the 56th Cavalry Division captured Elizavetovka and Fidlerovo, drove the Nazis out of Shavrovo, and rushed to Mikhailovka. By the beginning of February, the 1st cavalry corps joined in fierce battles with the approaching enemy reserves, covering the approaches to the Slavic-Kramatorsk fortified area from the west," A.A. Grechko. This information, specifying the enemy, was supplemented by the commander of the troops of the 57th Army D.I. Ryabyshev, reporting that on January 28-29, the 1st Cavalry Corps "fought stubborn battles with the approaching units of the 100th light infantry division of the enemy in the villages of Ivlevskoye and Mikhailovka"?

In fact, both of our corps went into battle with the Mackensen group that appeared at the front, which, having repulsed the attacks of exhausted cavalymen and tank brigades (there were only 6 tanks left in the 15th brigade), on January 31 it itself went on the offensive. This counteroffensive was carried out in three most important directions. For this, von Mackensen, a cavalryman by birth, with the rank of general of the cavalry, well aware of the weaknesses and strengths

'
The named villages were on the right flank of the Mackensen group advancing into this area. In the direction of these villages, the strike group Zanne operated with part of the 100th lpd, part of the 369th Croatian regiment and part of the 14th tank division.

21 river A.A. War years. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1976. - S. 111. 3 Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. - S. 162.

324

Konstantin Bykov

mobile troops, divided his group into several shock groups: -

- Kollerman - on the left flank (attack on Petropavlovka, where the Byk and Samara rivers merge, then - a strike to the east along Samara to Aleksandrovka);

- Khube and Roveder - in the center (Khube advances from Grishinoya Krivorozhye to Aleksandrovka in Samara, and Roveder - clears the rear);

- Zanne - on the right flank (attack on Golubovka and Ocheretino, securing the right flank of the Hube group for its exit to Aleksandrovka in Samara - the main goal of the offensive of the von Mackensen group).

From the units and subunits of the Croatian regiment, the 100th Ipd and the 14th tank division, two shock groups were formed - Hube! and Zanne. The Hube strike group hit the 5th KK A.A. Grechko, and the shock group Zanne - on the 1-th kk F.A. Parkhomenko. On January 31, the Hube strike group drove out parts of A.A. Grechko from the village of Krivorozhye, and on February 2 captured Spassko-Mikhailovka. On the same day, the Zanne strike group drove the Soviet units out of Anninsky. Croats participated in the operations of both shock groups.

Throughout February and March, in the area of the Samara River, the villages of Aleksandrovka, Gromovaya Balka, Ocheretino, Golubovka and Bezzabotovka, there were fierce bloody battles. The southern appendix of the Barvenkovsky bridgehead was liquidated by the Germans. However, Mackensen's group, which broke through almost to Barvenkov itself, ran into the well-known problems of all winter attackers. The enemy counterattacks were accompanied by lagging own supplies, snow and frost. The fresh 1st Mountain Division, introduced into the Mackensen group, allowed the group thrown back beyond Samara to restore its position and firmly gain a foothold on the above-mentioned river. By the 20th of March, the opposing

Hans-Valentin Hube - commander of the 16th Panzer Division in 1941 - 1942, the 14th Panzer Corps in 1942, the 1st Panzer Army in 1943 - 1944.

325

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

forces finally ran out of steam, and active hostilities were stopped.

The units of the 369th Croatian Regiment, exhausted in the February battles, were taken to rest in March, which, however, was not calm.

Dragan Klyakic told us the following about this period:

"On March 13, 1942, the 2nd Battalion, rested from the struggle, was on a collective farm north of Golubovka." Artillery department as part of the German 83rd Cannon-Artillery Regiment? supported the advance of the right neighbor. "8 Soviet soldiers were captured," wrote the staff sub-officer. On March 15, the 2nd battalion with a strong counterattack of the 5th hundred near Golubovka repelled the attack of the Soviet 574th rifle regiment: 200 Soviet soldiers were killed, 37 were taken prisoner, many weapons were captured.

03/25 - 05/16/1942. Standing on Samara. Preparing for Operation Fridericus-1. After the "maneuvering war in winter", as Mackensen called the localization of Barvenkovo-Lozovsky

breakthrough of the Soviet troops, his corps took over the watch on the upper reaches of Samara. During the indicated period, the corps consisted of the 1st mountain division (left flank), the 14th tank division (center) and the 100th lpd (right, i.e. eastern flank). The word "light" in relation to the 100th infantry regiment was losing its meaning more and more - in addition to the reinforced 369th regiment, the division was also given one of the regiments of the 60th motorized

| The village of Golubovka is located four kilometers to the north of the Sama-ra. Near it are the villages of Gromovaya Balka and Ocheretino, the place of the future, May, breakthrough of the Germans to Barvenkovo, which led to the encirclement and death of Soviet troops advancing on Kharkov from the Barvenkovo bridgehead.

2 The 83rd German Artillery Regiment (ACShepe-Kertepi 83) was part of the 100th Wehrmacht Light Infantry Division (100. |

3 Oganap As .5. 55. However, according to our data, the 574th rifle regiment of the 121st rifle division in this area was not.

326

Konstantin Bykov

divisions. Each of the opposing sides, observing each other, recorded the sorties of scouts and the work of troops to improve their positions.

The Croatian 369th Reinforced Infantry Regiment during the period of standing on Samara, like the Germans, rested, studied and received reinforcements.

"In Novaya Andreevka, the headquarters of the legion! received an order to depart with units subordinate to him to Kuroedovka," Dragan Klyakich reports about this period. - From that time on, the legion ceased to be the "Markul battle group", as the Germans used to call it. The legion was scattered among the German divisions as a reserve. The 1st battalion continued to remain in the 227th German regiment, the 2nd battalion received an order to defend the village of Golubovka, and the 3rd - the village of Aleksandrovka. The Artillery Department is located along the Samara River. Since March 30, the headquarters of the 369th regiment was in the village of Malaya Vasilyevka in the reserve of the division. During these days, the regiment was replenished with fresh fighters who arrived from Stockerau (WosKegam)... The most senior officer from the arriving replenishment was Infantry Major Tomislav Brajkovic (Top au Vtako\ms)... In the Stockerau camp, he was trained as a special methods of waging war on the Eastern Front...

... "We passed many villages," legionary Antun Koren (Ashot Kogep) reported in a letter from the front. - I wrote down the names of 15 villages and cities, but in these places, I can tell you, I did not see anything modern. There are no clean roads, only swamp. Railroads are rare. I myself am alive and well ... We are moving forward, only forward, because we know what we want, and we know that we will win ... "This letter was published on May 12, 1942 in the Ustasha" Croatian List "...

... In the "Croatian List" dated May 15, 1942, an article was placed about the successful deeds of the artillery of the 369th regiment on the Eastern Front. Iron crosses for these "deeds" were received by:

' Legion, legionnaires - this is how the soldiers of the 369th UPp often called their regiment and themselves.

327

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Lieutenant Colonel Marko Mesic (Mao Mez6) is from Belovar, the centurions Franjo Mladic (Egasho Mas) from Osijek, Franjo Zorets (Egapdo Goges) from Dubrovnik, Marian Prishlin (Magap Ribppn) from Sombor, Vasily Malgin (Uazshe Ma1t) from Bani Luka, lieutenants Alexander Friedrich (MeKzapar En4g) from the "Croatian Mitrovici" and Veljko Ostoich (Ue Ko Ozyub) from Zadar.

Letters from Ukrainian villages came to editorial offices in Zagreb, Mostar and Osijek. "War news" came from the legionary Martin Patsek (Magit Rasek) from Dal and the waterman! Hussein Murtich (Nizet Migi6). Josif Sharer (Tozr bageg) wrote to his friends in Osijek: "Yes, in Russia we do not see anything normal, European; everything is perverted, it is a completely different world and order. Jewish traces are visible everywhere. We don't even talk about some kind of well-being! About the Red Army, I can tell you that this headless army has been completely destroyed ... Only one of our detachments, and in only five days, destroyed two divisions of the Red Army ...

... "We are here - fear and awe for the Russians, and not without reason," wrote the legionnaire Yosif Galemovich (Tor Caletou1S), a native of Pozheg, to Dragutin Dzhurich (Ogagiip Ripb), his fellow countryman, in the camp Ustasha youth. "Fear and awe, of course! That's why they call us here the "devil's division", which in Russian sounds like "enemy division"...

... "The Bolsheviks valued the head of each legionnaire of the 369th Infantry Regiment at 200 rubles?" Lieutenant Janko Kraincic (TapKo Ktalpsins) told the Zagreb youth when he arrived in Zagreb for treatment...

At the end of April, Mackensen, parts of which, among other things, were engaged in the construction and strengthening of roads and

Vodnik - platoon leader.

2 Prices in the USSR in 1941: vodka - 11 rubles. 50 kopecks, rifle - 163 rubles, bread - 1 rub., PPSH - 500 rubles, herring - 6 rubles. 40 kopecks, "Red Moscow" perfume — 28 rubles. 50 kopecks, T-34 tank - 269,500 rubles.

3 rgawap Kuaks \$.56 - 58.

328

Konstantin Bykov

bridges in his rear, he stated with relief that the enemy "withdrew several of his formations from the front in front of the corps. The corps now faced only about three and a half divisions. At the end of April, the roads dried up, and "from May 12, the corps regrouped for its new offensive mission, the beginning of which was scheduled for May 18 (Operation Friederikus-1. - Auth.), But then due to events near Kharkov (offensive Soviet troops on May 12. - Auth.) was postponed to May 17. West of the Samara River, as well as in a narrow strip to the east, her corps was replaced by Romanian units. Thus, he was able to concentrate in time in the rear of his offensive area.

The morale of the Reinforced 369th Infantry Regiment on the eve of the Battle of Kharkov. "In war as in war" - by the beginning of the Kharkov battle, the Croats, not acting with their regiment as an integral combat unit, gained not only some combat experience as part of German units, but also the experience of moral suffering.

"Although officially the German representatives talked about the "brotherhood in arms of German soldiers and legionnaires", "about the sacrificial struggle of the 369th regiment", but in an unofficial setting, the German troops on the Eastern Front referred to their allies: Italians, Magyars, Romanians, Bulgarians and legionnaires of the NDH are contemptuous," writes Dragan Klyakich. - Middle officers and non-commissioned officers of the German units, who were seconded to some parts of the legion, at first kept with the legionnaires as if they were slaves, bought carts and ropes. The soldiers of the 369th regiment seemed to them soldiers without traditions, without perseverance, people of the lowest rank and unstable spirit, warriors unreliable in dangerous situations on front. Nevertheless, the Germans used them, including them in their units. They were advanced to the front lines and used as parapets.

'
Mackensen E. Decree. op. - S. 295, 297.

329

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Major Yosif Pletikosa () ozir PlenKoza), commander of the 2nd battalion, informed his commander Markul with a special report about the "incomprehensible attitude of the German allies", with a request to "pass it on to the authority".

"On that day, April 3, 1942, Colonel Neubecher (MeesWeg) from the 227th regiment and centurion Rautinger (Kaipipgeg) from the SS battalion "Germany" arrived at the headquarters of the 1st battalion in Golubovka," Pletikosa reported.

They were met with honor, as allies, as our fighting friends. Meanwhile, as soon as they arrived, they said from the threshold: "Are you running fast in front of the Russian tanks or slowly?"

"This," Pletikosa testified, "confused Lieutenant Velko Ostoich (UeTsko O\$yu]6) so much that at first moments he did not know how to answer them. They wanted to take it as a joke, but they weren't joking. As Velko Ostoich reported, the German centurion Rautinger, speaking to Colonel Neubecher about the legionnaires, said that in battle they would certainly have to resort to a combination: for every four fighters of the NDH legion, five German soldiers would be added. Colonel Neubecher also confirmed this. This means that our four legionnaires in battle must be defended by five Germans!

It is not for us to know why Messrs. Neubecher and Rautinger, officers of our friendly Germany, have such an opinion about our legionnaires. How is it confirmed when we, as warriors, won military recognition from the highest leaders of the German army, including the mustache of the Fuhrer himself?

Since we, the legionnaires of the Independent State of Croatia, are fighting together, shoulder to shoulder, with the glorious German army for the future of the New Europe, this opinion does not leave us indifferent. Frankly speaking, this harms the cause, all the more so since we, as everyone knows, are its most committed allies) who

|! Obviously, this refers to the SS regiment "Germany", which was part of the

becoming the SS division "Viking". 2 Croatia declared war on the USSR on June 22, 1941.

330

Konstantin Bykov

they bled and died every day on his side... One can come to the conclusion, says Major Pletikosa! battalion, which was assigned to these positions by order of the leadership of the 100th German light chasseur infantry division), to be with them as a military puppet. In view of this, I ask the regiment commander to relieve me of the post of commander of the 2nd battalion.

The execution of one of the servicemen of the 369th regiment did not add to the joy of the legionnaires, as Dragan Klyakich also told us about:

"Exactly on the anniversary of the "unfortunate and shameful war", April 6th", and four days before the anniversary of the proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia? the leadership of the regiment carried out the nightmarish "sentence in the name of the German people". According to the text of the verdict, Dzhemal Imamovich (O7eta! Ppatou]6), who was born in 1912 in the village of Vukovye near Tuzla, was recruited to the second hundred, was sentenced to death by a military court. "While the 2nd Hundred was on the defensive on the Mius River, the defendant, with a certain number of his comrades, was dressed up as a forward guard. It was necessary to be close to one bunker. A control check by a German officer revealed that Imamovich was not in his place, but climbed into the bunker himself,

Major Yosif Pletikosa served in the 369th regiment until July 1942. Evacuated from Russia due to severe injury.

2 So in the original. Officially, the 100th light infantry division was renamed Vegersky (100..Azeg-Pmz1op) in July 1942.

3 rgawap Kras \$.63 - 65.

"April 6, 1941, Germany and Italy attacked Yugoslavia. German aviation carried out massive bombing attacks on Belgrade and Zagreb. Italian aviation bombed coastal cities in Dalmatia (Croatia).

> April 10, 1941, the German army went on the offensive from the territory of Austria to Zagreb. One of the leaders of the Ustaše, S. Kvaternik, read out on the radio the text of the declaration proclaiming the "Independent State of Croatia" (ICH). In the evening, German units entered Zagreb without a fight.

331

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

that is, he left his guard post in front of the enemy," the verdict said.

Dzhemal Imamovich was pinned down by frost and snowstorm. And so I thought about where to serve further - near the bunker or inside it. As it continued to get cold, he climbed into the bunker. This became "a crime under Art. 141 of the German military penal code.

Imamovich appealed to the highest German authorities, to the army headquarters and to Berlin. But neither there nor there was he pardoned. The execution was confirmed by Field Marshal Keitel himself, signing the verdict - death by firing squad.

He was executed in accordance with all the rules, having unbelted and removed his weapon, placing blindfolded house guards in front of the ranks. Imamovich did not escape. So he ended his participation in the war.

What a beautiful death! Song! - said after the execution, lieutenant colonel of the headquarters department Ivan Babich ([wap Vas). If Imamovich had been liquidated directly according to the Ustasha law, which was valid for us in 1932, in exile, then he would have said goodbye to life in a completely different way. Piece by piece would be cut from his body until he was dead. German laws are merciful!"

369th regiment in the May Kharkov battle. On April 27, 1942, the legionaries of the Reinforced 369th Infantry Regiment sent a telegram to Hitler, in which they congratulated the leader of the Reich on his birthday. In his response telegram, Hitler thanked them for their congratulations and expressed confidence that the legionnaires "... will continue to honestly and to the end fulfill their duty in My troops"...

..."The best thing he did his duty in those days," Dragan Klyakich tells us, was the doctor of the 1st battalion Josif Babogredats (Tor Vabogtedas), who, having received a replacement, returned to Zagreb. How the legionnaires envied him! "Bless him! .. We are here

rgaap Kras .- \$. 67.

332

Konstantin Bykov

and we will continue to rot in anticipation of our hour, and on Sunday it will stagger along the Elachich parade ground.

On the same days, Stepan Tomash (5 (Erap Tot5), lieutenant, wrote in his diary: |

"Death mows down everyone around. My comrades, super-lieutenant (PayorogabshK) Dervish Beg Selmanovich (Oeru1\$ Without e!tapou!s) died - 20.U.42 near Serafimovskaya (Zegautou\$Ke)!. Lieutenants Vekoslav Chusich (Meko\$au Siz16) and Franjo Gilardi (Egapuo Slaga!) fell in the same battle. Near Perekopka (ReteKorKe) - lieutenants Gorchevich (Stse \ 16) and Chatich (Sanb), after that - commander (2arou] edptK) of the 1st battalion, centurion Geza Mayerberger (Sega Ma] eg Fegeoeg) "...

... On May 17, 1942, the legion launched an attack on Gusarovka? - for the first time on the Eastern Front, he attacked in full force. This was the beginning of Operation Fridericus, the battle for Kharkov.

The 369th Infantry Regiment participated in the battle for Kharkov before. In the history of the Ustasha Domobran Legion Dragan Klyakich, the actions of the artillery of the Croatian regiment near Kharkov in 194] are reported:

"Our artillery department (yuri oe!) supported the offensive of the German 54th infantry regiment," wrote the centurion Dragan Yurak (Ogagap GLagaK), a supply officer (orzKgosh bases) of the artillery department. We had the task of breaking the Russian fortified positions in the Kochubeevka-Iskrovka sector. The fight has been going on for five days now. One day, in the evening, we saw strong fires on the side of the enemy. The Russians set fire to everything that could burn in

'
On May 20, the 369th regiment as part of the 100th infantry regiment fought against units of the 2nd cavalry corps near Serafimovka, a settlement 28 km east of Barvenkovo.

Gusarovka is a populated locality 8 km west of Barvenkovo, on the Sukhoi Torets River.

3 Ogazap KraKs. 5.59.

4 The 54th regiment belonged to the 100th light infantry division known to us.

333

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the village of Iskrovka, and began to retreat. This Russian military method has been known since the time of Napoleon's campaign.

The pursuit began in the direction of the village of Kolomak. The enemy defended every settlement. Many Bolsheviks have accumulated in the city of Valki. It seemed that they intended to stubbornly defend themselves here, since this was the outskirts of Kharkov. After our first shells, which fell on Valki, the enemy left the city, and our units entered it ... ""...

At the beginning of a new battle for Kharkov, which began on May 17, 1942 for the 369th regiment, the regiment was still part of the 100th light infantry division, which was located on the right, eastern, flank of the 3rd motorized army corps of the cavalry general von Mackensen. The initial position of the corps was the upper course of the Samara River. The troops of the corps were located from west to east in the following sequence: the 20th Romanian Infantry Division, the 1st Mountain Division, the 14th Panzer Division and the Italian battle group Barbo (about 170 tanks in total), the 100th Light Infantry division. In Mackensen's second echelon was the 60th Motorized Infantry Division. The main forces of the first echelon—five infantry regiments and 170 tanks—were concentrated on a narrow 20 km section from Aleksandrovka to Golubovka. Here they were opposed by only two Soviet formations - the 341st (Colonel A.I. Shchagin) and the 106th rifle divisions. The same picture was observed in the offensive zone of the German 44th Army Corps (east of the Mackensen Corps), where only two Soviet rifle divisions of the 9th Army, the 335th and 51st, opposed 12 German regiments and 170 tanks on the 20-km front. i2.

On May 17, the corps struck to the north, in the direction of Barvenkovo - at the junction of the Soviet 341st and 106th rifle divisions of the 9th army (this was actually the junction between the 9th and 57th armies of the Southern

Rgawap Krakg. \$. 61.

* S1apkh Rama M. Quagkou 1942. Zagredop Koskushe Sepie. MU (PibU5 Nea sh She Opkea 5\$1zhchez\$ Bu Zagredop, 1998, Bu Rau! a M. Clan!>). R. 167.

334

Konstantin Bykov

front). The axis of attack by Mackensen's corps coincided with the axis of the January offensive and the February retreat of the 5th Cavalry Corps of the Southern Front: Barvenkovo - Aleksandrovka - Barvenkovo.

The direct opponent of the 100th division and, consequently, the 369th regiment, was the 106th rifle division of the 9th army.

"The legion began attacking the Soviet positions at 4 o'clock," Dragan Klyakich continues to tell us about the actions of the 369th regiment. - At 5 o'clock, stepping over the bodies of their dead comrades, the regiment captured Gromovaya Balka, at 5.30 - Ocheretino, at 8.30 - Bessarabovka (Vezagaboukka). On the positions taken, the legionnaires dug in and went on the defensive.

The Red Army units opposite were cleverly taken by surprise. It seems that their intelligence services could not reveal the German grouping and the direction of the strike. Thousands of Soviet soldiers were captured and taken prisoner. "We continued our offensive at 14.30," the chronicler writes. - At 20.10, the enemy once again tried to organize resistance from a height of 156.4 on the path Nekrenskoye - Gusarovka (MeKgep \$ Koe? - Slzagouka). At 20.30 the objective of the offensive was achieved. The resistance was broken. 365 Soviet soldiers were captured. Our losses: 6 sub-officers died, 26 home brigades: 2 officers, 9 sub-officers and 130 home brigades were wounded "...

Near the village of Nekremennoe, which is called Nekrenskoe in Croatian documents, there was the village of Viknino. Units of

! Most likely, we are talking about the village of Bezzabotovka.

2 Obviously, this refers to the village of Nekremennoe.

3 Sub-officer - non-commissioned officer, domobran - "militia, defender of the motherland, soldier of the fascist army in Croatia during the Second World War" (I.I. Tolstoy. Serbo-Croatian Russian Dictionary. - M.: "Russian language", 1976). The 369th regiment is called the Ustashe-Domobransky, meaning that it was formed from Ustashe volunteers.

s Ogagap Kuaks. 5.60.

335

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

106th Soviet Rifle Division. "Up to an infantry regiment with 14 tanks, they attacked the eighth company of the 442nd regiment of the 106th rifle division. Led by the commander of the 8th company, officer Minaevsky, the Soviet soldiers fought staunchly, repelling the fierce attacks of the enemy. The enemy, having lost eight tanks, did not achieve success and in the afternoon began to bypass the company from the side of Viknino," says the Front Illustration. It is possible that the prisoners mentioned in the history of the 369th Reinforced Infantry Regiment were taken precisely as a result of the bypass of Viknino.

By evening, the remnants of the 106th Infantry Division took up defensive positions to the northeast of Barvenkovo, which had been captured by the enemy. Here, in the area of the villages of Ilyichevka, Novaya Dmitrovka, Krasnozorevka and Grigorovka, the 106th Rifle Division and the 34th Cavalry Division of Colonel A.N. Inauri tried to delay the advance of German troops to Izyum, but they came under attack from the 14th and 16th tank, 384th and 389th infantry divisions of the Germans.

"The first task of the corps — the capture of Barvenkovo and the forcing of the Sukhoi Torets River to the east of it — was completed on the first day," von Mackensen reported on the results of the day on May 17. "The breakthrough through the enemy's main line of defense was successful everywhere in one throw, which was immediately joined by a blow to the Sukhoi Torets River and through it ... Despite the difficulties, as a result, the flank divisions (on the right - light infantry, on the left - the 1st mountain division) also managed to achieve the goals of their first assignment very quickly. The intended surprise for the enemy, thanks to the skill of the troops in its preparation, was fully achieved. Soon the enemy ran everywhere behind the Dry Butt River and across it. Great trophies were taken. On the evening of May 17, all divisions stood with their advanced units on the northern bank of the Sukhoi Torets River, Barvenkovo was firmly in the hands of mountain rangers.

! "Front illustration". Battles for Kharkov in May 1942. Andrei Galushko, Maxim Kolomiets. - 2000. - No. 6.
See also: S1apk Baza M. Decree. op. S. 171.

? Mackensen E. Decree. op. - S. 300.

336

Konstantin Bykov

The chronicle compiled by us of the further participation of the reinforced 369th Infantry Regiment in the Kharkov battle looks like this:

May 18 The 100th light infantry division and the 60th motorized infantry division, which was brought into battle to the right of it, were located east of Barvenkovo and, covering the 3rd motorized corps from the east, from where the troops of the 44th army corps went to join it, cleared the area from units of the 349th, 106th and 335th Soviet rifle divisions.

May 19. The 100th infantry regiment, with the 369th regiment included in its composition, changed the direction of the offensive from north to west and was located 16 km north-west of Barvenkovo, between the villages of Bolshaya Andreevka and Ivanovka. The task of this formation was to protect the left flank of the 14th and 16th Panzer Divisions, which continued to advance in a northerly direction in order to establish contact with the 6th Paulus Army and slam the encirclement around the Soviet troops advancing on Kharkov. With the 60th Motorized Infantry Division to its right and the 1st Mountain Division to its left, the 100th Infantry Infantry Division repulsed the attacks of the 2nd Cavalry Corps coming from the west to Bolshaya Andreevka.

May 20. The 16th Panzer Division turned west and took up a position between the 100th Infantry Division and the 60th Infantry Division (Mot.). The purpose of this perturbation was to cut off the 57th Army of the Southern Front from the 6th Army and Bobkin's Army Group of the Southwestern Front. On that day, the 16th Panzer Division, the 100th Infantry Infantry Division, and the 1st Mountain Division went on the offensive and, breaking through the front of the 2nd Cavalry Corps (Colonel G.A. Kovalev), captured Bolshaya Andreevka at 1200. The axis of the German offensive passed through Lozovaya, held by the Soviet troops, and ran into the 1st and 4th Romanian infantry divisions of the 6th Romanian army corps.

"Insufficient efficiency in the work of the staffs and unclear assignment of tasks," Moskalenko described the situation, "result in the fact that the troops of the 6th Army (South-Western Front) are late to concentrate on the Bolshaya Andreevka-Petrovskoye line. Meanwhile, the German fascist command,

337

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

seeing in the active actions of the 2nd cavalry corps a threat to his flank south of Barvenkovo, he transfers a tank division there at night. The latter, having broken through the defenses of the cavalry corps, takes possession of Bolshaya Andreevka until the units of the 6th Army are concentrated there "...

However, this was not the end of the matter. On the same day, the 369th Croatian Infantry Regiment reached Serafimovka, located 18 km west of Bolshaya Andreevka.

May 21st. The 369th regiment, together with the 100th light infantry division, continued combat operations with the front to the west. The regiment's opponents were units of the 2nd KK, 99th Rifle Division of the 14th Guards Rifle Division. The 16th Panzer Division again went north.

22nd of May. On that day, the 14th Panzer Division, which was pushing its way to the north, captured Bayrak and joined forces with the troops of the German 6th Army. From that moment on, the troops of the Soviet 6th Army, the Bobkin Army Group and the 57th Army were surrounded, the 100th Infantry Division with the 369th Regiment, continuing to advance to the west and southwest, towards Lozovaya, beyond - enough Old Twins and went to the river Britai.

May, 23rd. Having handed over its section of the front to the 2nd and 20th Romanian infantry divisions, the 100th infantry division urgently went to the Mechebilovo area. Turning their front to the north, together with the 389th and 384th infantry and 60th motorized infantry divisions, the 100th division and the Croats took part in blocking the Soviet troops breaking through to the east. According to Soviet data, the opponents of the 100th leader these days were units of the 2nd Cavalry Corps, 341st Rifle Division of the 14th Guards. sd.

May 24th. Together with the 2nd, 1st and 20th Romanian (left) and 389th (right) infantry divisions, the 100th Ipd struck north across the Britai River against the 351st and 99th rifle divisions, units of the 2nd kk, according to the 341st Rifle, 14th Guards

,
Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book I. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - S. 202.

338

Konstantin Bykov

rifle and 248th rifle divisions. The Soviet units withdrew to Mirolyubovka and Fedorovka on the Berek River.

May 25th. The 100th Infantry Division, together with its neighbors, having advanced towards Mirolyubovka and Fedorovka, continued to block the southern border of the Kharkov cauldron.

26 of May. The 100th infantry division of the 20th Romanian infantry division from the south, the 1st mountain and 60th motorized infantry divisions from the north struck towards each other and cut off the part of the Soviet troops most advanced to the east from the common cauldron of the encircled. According to the maps compiled by David Glantz and the captured German maps provided by Glantz's wattle!, units of the 23rd Panzer Corps (6A, Major General E.G. Pushkin), 411 -th (6A, Colonel M.A. Pesochin), 248th (6A, Colonel A.A. Mishchenko), 99th Rifle Division (57A, commander - Colonel V.Ya. Vladimirov, commissar - N.N. Shakin) and the 14th Guards. SD (57A, Major General I.M. Shepetov, former 96th SD of the second formation). The eastern border of this "center" was only 8 km from the "mainland".

May 27th. The 369th Croatian Regiment as part of the 100th Infantry Division takes part in the liquidation of the encircled Soviet troops in the area of Mirolyubovka, Zeleny Gay, r. Lozovenka. The enemy of the 100th Ipd is part of the 99th sdi of the 14th guards. sd. Neighbors: on the left - the 20th Romanian, on the right - the 1st mountain division.

Veteran of the 99th Red Banner Rifle Division K.I. Cherniavsky left us a short description of the division's breakthrough from the Kharkov encirclement:

"Having made a difficult march in the conditions of spring thaw, the division concentrated in the area of the railway station Bliznetsy *, in the south of the Kharkov region, and came under the control of the 57th Army. Here, by order of the commander of the army, General K.P. She changed her underwear by finding

| Slapk Rama M. Atsaz apa zigueu. TVEzole Quagkou OYepzthe, 12-29 May 1942 (Rama S1Laty2 Prodisk, 1998). Cards 63 - 65.

2 This area, in the capture of which the 369th Croatian regiment participated, was defended by the 99th Sdi of the 14th Guards. sd.

339

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

General Kamkov's group of troops, which was on the defensive, occupied its positions on the Barvenkovsky ledge. Fierce fighting flared up in this area, the considerable severity of which fell to the lot of the 99th Rifle Division. "Only for eleven hours on May 17," recalled the head of the political department of the division, I.M. Chervov, "our units repulsed nine violent attacks" ... In the area of \u200b\u200bthe village and station Lozovaya, the division repulsed 17 attacks in two days, destroying a large number of enemy soldiers and officers during this time. On May 21, 1942, the Military Council of the 57th Army proclaimed gratitude to the 99th Division for their steadfastness.

However, fascists? managed to surround the soldiers of the division. Gathering the commanders and commissars of the units, Colonel Vladimirov declared:

Our situation is difficult, but not hopeless. It is necessary to break through the enemy ring with a decisive blow in the direction of the city of Izyum and withdraw our units to the eastern bank of the Seversky Donets. Swiftmess and suddenness of action will be our allies in this battle.

The division commander set the task of simultaneously attacking the soldiers of the 197th and 206th regiments, reinforced by two artillery divisions, to break through between the villages of Dmitrovskoye and Petrovskoye and ensure the exit of the remaining units. The first regiment, with one artillery battalion, withdrew in the rear guard and provided cover. The reconnaissance company was supposed to create the appearance of an offensive by active actions in the area of \u200b\u200bthe positions left by the units.

'F.V. Kamkov - from March 23, 1942 - lieutenant general. In 1942 he commanded the 18th and 47th armies. From February 12 to April 24, 1942, he commanded a cavalry-mechanized group of troops of the Southern Front, which was located on the Barvenkovsky ledge, south of Lozovaya. Before the Kharkov operation, the Kamkov group was replaced by rifle divisions of the 57th Army. On May 17, these SDs were opposed by formations of the 6th Romanian Army Corps.

2 When "Hitlerites" and "fascists" are written in memoirs, but the word "Germans" is not used, this is often, although not always, a sure sign that the enemy was Romanians, Slovaks, Croats or Hungarians - our future allies in the socialist camp.

340

Konstantin Bykov

On the night of May 23, the troops withdrew from their positions.

Moving in the forefront, the battalion of Captain F.V. Duplenko reached Dmitrovka at two in the morning and entered the village, knowing that the enemy was there. The Nazis mistook our column for their own. Guns and tractors stood in the streets and alleys, staff buses stood by the school building; soldiers slept in houses, only guns and machine guns were sentries.

The soldiers of our battalion were ready for the decisive battle. But their main task was to break through. The division commander ordered to open fire only as a last resort. And they broke through without firing a shot. Only when the battalion hid behind the outskirts of the village and other units of the regiment approached, the Nazis realized themselves and opened random fire.

On the way to Dmitrovka there were already other units. A new solution was required, and the commander of the 206th regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Yegorov, ordered the 6th company, reinforced by machine gun and mortar platoons, to attack the Nazis from the southeastern outskirts of the village and tie them up in battle. The battalion commissar S.E. went with this detachment. Yuriev. Everyone who was part of the detachment understood the responsibility that fell on them. Perhaps, at the cost of their lives, they will ensure a breakthrough of the main forces.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Egorov, having gathered the main forces of the regiment, struck in a northeast direction and made his way. But the detachment, led by Yuryev, was forced to retreat under enemy fire, and only by the end of the day did he manage to get out of the encirclement.

It was even more difficult for the units of the 197th regiment, which made their way in the direction of the village of Petrovskoe. The fierce battle began in the afternoon of May 24 and did not stop until the morning. Machine-gun and machine-gun bursts, explosions of mines and grenades, shouts of "Hurrah!" merged into a single rumble. Having broken through the last two lines of defense of the Nazis, the soldiers of the division crossed to the eastern bank of the Seversky Donets. Crossing the river under enemy fire

341

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

was extremely heavy. Many were not destined to reach the eastern shore.

It was not easy for the rearguard units of the 1st regiment, along with which the head of the political department of the division, I.M. Chervov.

The fight was furious. Both sides suffered heavy losses. Everyone knew that the critical moment had come. The enemy far outnumbered us. Nevertheless, up to a company of Soviet soldiers broke through enemy barriers. But those who fell behind were pressed to the ground by fire. Many of them never got up again. Nurse Nyura Tkach performed a feat during the breakthrough. She dragged four wounded into the bomb crater and began to bandage them. At this time, the unit that had broken through was already far away. And when the Nazis surrounded the funnel, Nyura opened fire from a machine gun. Then the grenades were launched. The brave girl fought to the last breath and died like a hero. The life of a Soviet patriot cost the Nazis dearly.

After the cleansing of the pocket, the 369th Reinforced Infantry Regiment stopped to rest in the area of recent fighting.

"In Krasny Liman, the headquarters of the 100th German division officially congratulated the 369th regiment for the battle near Kharkov, "at the same time, near Kharkov, this unit was used for the first time in full strength in alliance with the Germans. Sieg Heil Fuhrer! Gadot zrgetp!" - says the history of the 369th regiment. — Did you receive congratulations from the commanders of Army Group South — von Kleist — for "distinction in the Battle of Kharkov"? and Colonel General von Mackensen.

This praise was best felt by lieutenant Franjo Andužij (Egapo ApdiS16) and Lieutenant Martin Botz (Mait Vo?). They "thanks to connections" received a new appointment and returned home. Nikola Djorechich (#MKoJa Rogue\$16), cell

Chernyavsky K.I. Always with the fighters. - M. 1979. - S. 111 - 113.

2 Ewald von Kleists November 1940 to November 1942 commanded the 1st Panzer Army. Army Group South was commanded by Field Marshal Fedor von Bock from January 1942.

342

Konstantin Bykov

Nick and the priest at the headquarters of the regiment, experienced the same happiness. Not finding his god here, he returned to Zagreb.

The heavy losses that the units of the regiment suffered in the Battle of Kharkov (May-June 1942) seriously undermined morale, which was noted in their notice by the Ministry of Home Guard of the NDH and the commander of the legion. Apart from the inaccurate figures in the "military diaries", nowhere was the true number of those killed, missing and seriously wounded reported. Only the unit commanders knew about it."

The death of the 369th Croatian regiment. On May 31, 1942, the day of the official end of the Battle of Kharkov, the German command congratulated the Croats on the capture of 5,000 Soviet troops. However, military happiness is changeable...

After Ivan Markul, who commanded a regiment near Kharkov, the commander of the reinforced 389th Infantry Regiment was Viktor "Vityaz" Pavichich (UShKog "UCe2" Pawls), who led the regiment to Stalingrad. Fighting in the most critical areas, including the Krasny Oktyabr plant, the Croatian-Bosnian regiment suffered heavy losses. By October 13, 1942, 983 people remained alive in it. By the end of November, 5 officers, 9 non-commissioned officers and 110 ordinary soldiers were listed as alive.

On January 23, 1943, 18 wounded Croats were evacuated from Stalingrad, including Sergeant Jurich (Vjps), who took with him a combat log of the 369th regiment.

The fate of the regiment commander still remains unknown. In the 20th of January 1943, Colonel Viktor Pavichic was allegedly evacuated from Stalingrad by plane. However, this plane did not land anywhere else. According to another version, Pavičič was executed by the Germans for cowardice. The basis for this version was Pavičič's documented request to the command of the 100th division for his replacement.

rgavap Kuaks \$.61-62.

343

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

"Because he had no more soldiers left, except for a few wounded, he felt his uselessness. He proposed that Colonel Mesič (commander of the regiment's artillery) replace him, and the aon (Pavičič) would fly from Stalingrad back to Stockerau, where by that time a German-Croatian formation had been formed to fight partisans in the Balkans," writes about this Alain Milic'.

And it seems that we are more ready to believe in the version of the cowardice of the commander, who forgot about his military duty, as soon as death or captivity became inevitable, than in flying into the unknown. It is possible that the German command reacted badly to Pavičič's request, and he was shot. However, the death of Pavičič in a downed plane would have been no less shameful - after all, he abandoned his soldiers ...

A few days after the disappearance of Pavicic, on February 2, 1943, the last 70 people from the 369th regiment, led by artillery lieutenant colonel Marko Mesichem-? (he led the regiment from January 20 to February 2, 1943) surrendered to Soviet captivity.

Once there, their German brothers-in-arms told us the following: "The Croats, who belonged to the Austrian division, began to gather together. In terms of language, they

they really could negotiate well with the Russians and tried to use this in order to knock out advantages for themselves. Similar thoughts came to

"Stalingrad" commander of the 369th regiment Oberst Viktor Pavichic.

Crusade against Russia. - M.: Yauza, 2005. - S. 390. In 1947, Marko Mesic was extradited to Yugoslavia and executed.

344

Konstantin Bykov

Austrians... Some of them, replacing German eagles with swastikas with Austrian red and white cockades, cooperated with the now Germanophobically settling their affairs Croats, who, however, fought on our side to the end, like good soldiers. So unpredictable were the peoples of the Balkans...

The unpredictability of the peoples of the Balkans was also expressed in the fact that, as Karl K. Savic told us, "some of the Croatian prisoners of war later switched sides and fought as part of the Red Army, as the "1st Royal Yugoslav Brigade in the Soviet Union "...

As for the 100th Light Infantry (Jäger) Division, it perished in Stalingrad along with the Croatian regiment. Secondly, the 100th division was formed in Croatia in 1943. However, she no longer had a heroic future: the Balkans, Ternopil, the famous cauldron near Brody, again the Balkans, Silesia and surrender to Russian captivity ...

Opponent of the 369th Croatian Reinforced Regiment, the 100th Light Infantry Division, the 14th Panzer Division and the 60th Motorized Infantry Division in the early days of the German offensive. In 1945, after the war, G.K. Zhukov arrived to hunt on the island of Rügen, where the 90th Infantry Division was located at that time:

"We drank for everyone. They didn't drink to the division commanders. It was our main support from the beginning to the end of the war. Divisional commanders played a decisive role both in defense and offensive, and in formation, and in training. These are our personnel, the most necessary. One of them is here," said Zhukov to the hunters and proposed a toast to the commander of the 90th Red Banner Ropshinsky Order of Suvorov and Kutuzov, 2nd Class Rifle Division.

In 1953, Malenkov, leafing through the candidate's file for the

GOg. ULrapa \ Mayaeg. SOteep - (a | prgay - Mipswep. Obenefep magician agipz \$ pisN: uogreseVep. Ze {ue ar, 2004 (electronic edition of the former artilleryman of the 71st Infantry Division of the Wehrmacht).

345

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

commandant of Moscow, was indignant: "Why did you slip me such a candidate? He must not only protect Moscow, but also protect the leadership of the country, but can a person with such a biography be trusted? He did not know what he did in Spain, it is not known who he met, but he was encircled seven times in the Patriotic War ... "...

In both cases, it was about Nikolai Grigorievich Lyashchen

ko - the commander of the multi-stra- Commander of the 106th rifle long-range 106th rifle division N.G. Lyashchenko. vision!, which in May 1942

took on the blow of the right flank of Mackensen's 3rd motorized corps.

By May 17, the 106th Rifle Division of the 9th Army was defending the front to the south between Andreevka and Yakovlevka in the upper reaches of Samara. The western neighbor of the division was the 34th Rifle Division, the eastern neighbor was the 335th Rifle Division of the 349th Rifle Division. The 106th Rifle Division was hit by units of the 14th Panzer Division, the 60th Motorized Infantry Division and the 100th Light Infantry Division. The latter, as we already know, was reinforced by the Reinforced 369th Croatian Regiment and one regiment of the 60th MD. On the very first day of the German offensive, the 106th Rifle Division was torn into two parts. One part was thrown back to the north, to Barvenkovo, and took up defensive positions northeast of Barvenkovo, trying to block the Germans from reaching Izyum. The other part of the division was thrown back to the northeast, where, south of Sukhoi Torets, together with units of the 335th and 349th rifle divisions, it immediately found itself sandwiched between the "Aleksandrovskaya" (3rd motorized AK) and the "Kramator-

'! Composition of the 106th Rifle Division in 1941: 397th, 442nd and 534th joint ventures, 553rd ap, 201st oipd, 430th division. batr (449th ozad), 167th RR (167th RB), 156th sapb, 500th obs, 143rd medical battalion, 77th orkhz, 197th attr (197th atb), 145th groin, 16th dvl, 734 (650) PPS, 37th PKGG.

346

Konstantin Bykov

sko-Slavic "(44th and 52nd AK) by German shock groups.

By May 15, the first part of the 106th Rifle Division withdrew to the west, towards Bolshaya Andreevka, where the front to the east fought off the units of the 14th TDI of the 60th Rifle Division. The second part of the 106th division, surrounded by the 100th infantry division with the 369th Croatian regiment, units of the 68th infantry division, 389th infantry division, 60th mdi of the 14th infantry division, managed to move north and cross over Dry Butt.

On May 19, the 106th Rifle Division was already marked on the maps of Glants on the northern bank of the Seversky Donets. Since the 335th Rifle Division is also marked there, it is obviously about the second group, which, having crossed the Sukhoi Torets, managed to cross the Seversky Donets, and thereby break out of the encirclement.

"The 9th Army, consisting of the 349th, 343rd, 106th, 335th, 51st and 296th rifle divisions, two regiments of the 333rd rifle division, the 39th, 34th and 60th cavalry divisions and four tank brigades, entrenched on the left bank of the river Sev. Donets, was supposed to organize an attack on Dolgenkaya from the Studenok area, and with part of the forces to clear Izyum from the enemy, "FI reports with reference to the Combat Orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the direction No. 0141, 0142 and 0143 of May 19. Obviously, here we are talking about that part of the 106th rifle division, which, together with parts of the 335th rifle division of the 349th rifle division, broke through to the northern bank of the Seversky Donets west of Izyum. And it is quite obvious that our command had no idea about the actual state of the divisions that had broken through: according to Soviet documents, they continued to be listed as divisions, and on the German maps given by Glantz, as "parts of divisions."

In the recording of negotiations on a direct wire by the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General A.M. Vasilevsky with the High Command of the South-Western Direction of May 19, refers to the subordination of the 6th Army to the "106th Rifle Division of the 9th Army, which is subordinate to the 5th KK." Obviously, here we are talking about that part of the 106th Rifle Division, which retreated to the west - into the zone of the 6th Army. Unfortunately, we are not

347

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

managed to find references to the 106th Rifle Division in Soviet documents dated after May 19th.

On May 20-21, on the maps of Glants, the 106th Rifle Division was marked on the left bank of the Donets in the area opposite the right-bank villages of Petrovskoe and Zavgorodnee, west of Izyum.

May 22 - The 106th Rifle Division, according to Glants, is already northeast of Izyum.

May 25 - German maps indicate units of the 106th Rifle Division northeast of Izyum.

The commander of the 106th Rifle Division, Colonel N.G. Lyashchenko recalled those days:

"In March 1942, I was appointed commander of the 106th Infantry Division. In January 1942, the Headquarters planned to launch a general offensive of the Red Army. The troops of the South-Western and Southern fronts carried out the Barvenkovsko-Lozovskaya offensive operation. Parts of our division fought south of Bezzabotovka. We took the Gromovaya Balka settlement. And Larin (ChVS of the Southern Front. - Auth.) congratulated me on my first success in my new POSITION. Our "hawks", who fought selflessly and skillfully, also helped us. Looking at them, we took the height behind Gromovaya Balka in a matter of minutes. And the Nazis went on the offensive in the general direction of Barvenkovo, using the support of a large number of aircraft.

The situation worsened with each passing hour. Contact with the army was lost. Our troops planned to take Kharkov, then force the Dnieper and take possession of Dnepropetrovsk. I stayed on the defensive. My division was not full-blooded, it was supported by an artillery battalion and an anti-tank regiment - 11 guns. And that's all. And we defended 32 kilometers instead of the prescribed 8-10. And out of the blue, against fascist tanks. Our 57th and 6th armies went on the offensive. The Nazis launched a counterattack along the Seversky Donets from Kharkov to the Donbass. And surrounded us in one day.

The headquarters was also attacked by enemy aircraft. I was supposed to be supported by the 12] 1st tank brigade of the regiments

348

Konstantin Bykov

nick N.N. Radkevich and the 333rd Infantry Division stood nearby. We have already equipped trenches for tanks. However, there were no tanks. The brigade and division were thrown to the right flank, where they were supposed to take the village of Mayaki. But a meeting battle ensued, the village was not taken, and those who survived crossed over the Seversky Donets. I was left alone. For four days, the division and I left the encirclement. I lost more than four thousand people, half a division. And they went like this: two regiments in front, one behind, in the middle - artillery ...

The tanks are coming, we have no shells, no guns. There was only one way left for the division - to retreat to the Seversky Donets. We went to the river. No boats, no ferries, how to cross? In addition, we had with us the bath and laundry women's detachment of the 57th Army and the personnel of the outgoing warehouses. What to do? It was a real tragedy. They began to cut trees for rafts. He explained how to cross the river on a horse. But this also needs to be learned. Not everyone succeeds. The chief of staff broke his leg. And to top it all, fascist planes flew in - the bombing of the crossing began. Yes, that's how it came out. And the last time he left the encirclement was when he went to the Cossacks on the Don in the summer of 1942. I led a division to reform, near Rossosh. It was ordered to surrender all weapons, people, command staff to the company. It is unlikely, of course, it was reasonable. We are left without an asset, which is so necessary during the reorganization. True, I confess, I saved something: both soldiers and weapons.

At this time, the Nazis broke through our defenses at Kupyansk. My division, given its condition, had to leave for Millerovo as soon as possible. And it so happened that my car closed the column. She was knocked out, threw me into a ravine, I lost consciousness. I woke up, I realized that we were left. I started gathering people. 17 days made his way to his own.

We walked through the territory occupied by the enemy. Thanks to the Cossacks. They supported us and fed us. We didn't even have a map. The centurion alone drew something like a diagram on paper, showed on it settlements, rivers all the way to Stalingrad.

349

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Then I gave this scheme to N.S. Khrushchev. We went out to our own, five people survived. Yes, our situation was unenviable. You yourself understand what the encircled people are at that time ... "

Ultimately, N.G. Lyashchenko, after numerous checks, was appointed deputy commander of the 18th division. And during the years of the WAR, he "grew" to the division commander. The title of Hero of the Soviet Union, to which he presented himself twice during the war years, received only in 1990. He was awarded five Orders of Lenin, the Order of Zhukov, the Order of the October Revolution, the Orders of Suvorov and Kutuzov, and many other orders. With the death of Army General N.G. Lyashchenko in 2000, we no longer have veterans who commanded divisions in the Great Patriotic War ...

' The information about Lyashchenko was taken from online sources with reference to the publications of L.I. Bulychov ("Military History Journal" for 1995) and Alexander Kochukov ("Red Star" dated May 16, 2000). Information about the composition of the 106th Infantry Division - [yŷŷ:/\y\l.gKKa.ga](#).

384th infantry division

Short story. At the end of 1941 and in the first months of 1942, the Eastern Front was urgently replenished with reanimated in the West and new divisions. In January [“—^—Z

1942 to make up for winter losses and hold the front. Emblems of the division. four new infantry divisions of the 17th wave were sent here. In April, to participate in the summer offensive - five new infantry divisions of the 18th wave AND four new infantry divisions of the 19th waves.

The divisions of the 18th wave (the “Gold of the Rhine” wave) also included the 384th Infantry Division formed in January 1942. Already eight months after arriving on the Eastern Front, the remnants of this division dissolved in Stalingrad. The 384th infantry division of the second formation lived for about the same time, which, having arrived at our front at the end of 1943, disappeared from April to July 1944 and disappeared in the south of Ukraine and Moldova ...

The 384th Infantry Division of the first formation INCLUDED:

- shashchepe-KeztegE 534 (Saxon)
- shashchepe-Kerltegy 535 (Silesian)
- shashchepe-Kegitepi 536 (Austrian)
- ACShepe-Kerttegi 384 (comprising four divisions)
- Raptzaeeg-AMe! Shipe 384 (as part of a scooter squadron and two anti-tank companies)

— Rucheg-WaaShop 384

- MasbisShep-AeShipe 384

— Zapyab-Aelipre 384

351

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The first commander of the 384th Infantry Division was Lieutenant General Baron von Gableni (Essaga Egewetg wop Caen). He also commanded a division near Kharkov.

384th Infantry Division in the Battle of Kharkov. "At the beginning of March, after the formation of the division was completed," says the history of the 384th Infantry Division, "it was redeployed to the

Commander of the 384th Infantry E La Vos Division, Lieutenant General of the Precise Front (Army Group von Gablenz. "South", Field Marshal von Bock). The ultimate goal of the railway. ne

transportation was Gorlovka in the Donets Basin.

In order to accustom the troops to harsh combat conditions, they were soon assigned to the Donets region (near Slavyansk). The divisional command post was first located in Konstantinovka, and at the beginning of the spring offensive was transferred to Kramatorsk.

In the winter of 1941/42, the enemy, advancing across the Donets, achieved a deep penetration on both sides of the Izyum and intended to use this for a forceps operation. A strong strike group gathered near Slavyansk, which should

' Born in 1891 in Prussia. Service record: 1914 - awarded the Iron Crosses, 1915 - chief lieutenant, [918 - hauptmann, 1938 - major general, 1940 - lieutenant general. In the French campaign, he commanded the 7th Infantry Division, was awarded the Knight's Cross. He escaped from Stalingrad in December 1942. He commanded the 404th and 232nd divisions.

2 Gapv Ch. Sezsysshche 4er 384. drag-Omchul 1942 - 1944. KO, 1965.

] A group in the area of Slavyansk - formations of the 44th AK, the eastern flank of which was covered and participated in the breakthrough of the Soviet front - formations of the 52nd AK. The main striking force of the Slavic group was the 16th Panzer Division.

352

Konstantin Bykov

er 386 No. / emeen-bunmol st. Me Mas21942 3 26. Adi 1944

Kÿtrue yoke Mogzetvue | 5: MAZ5TAV Bull dl

her" Moszoyeue => ye eeya >

=. - Dor "m9 Locheche-otier No.

SD Au dula o"

—__—— fetoeloe> with —

Combat route of the 384th Infantry Division.

on was to advance to the north-west to the Donets, and then along the Donets, in order to lock the boiler together with the German troops advancing from the north.

The battles that lasted from May 17 to May 28, 1942, went down in history as the encirclement battle near Kharkov During these battles, the young division overcame trials as part of the 17th Army and was subordinated first to the 44th Army Corps, and later to the 3rd Tank Corps.

The task of the division was, first of all, to break through the enemy positions near Bylbasovka and Krasnoarmeyskoye, which had been equipped and fortified during the winter, and then to follow the 16th Panzer Division advancing north to Izyum.

On May 17, 1942, after a short fire attack, the division went on the offensive and, in continuous advance, broke through the enemy positions. The enemy was driven back, and in places his retreat resembled a flight. Our attack clearly stunned him.'

German troops in this sector of the front were located from west to east: units of the 68th Infantry Division, the regiment of the 389th Infantry Division, the 384th Infantry Division, the 97th Infantry Division, the 384th Infantry Division, the 101st Infantry Division, and the 257th Infantry Division. Behind them were: the 16th TD and parts of the 389th Infantry Division. The opponents of these formations were Soviet: 349, 335, 51st Rifle Division, two regiments of the 333rd Rifle Division, 78th Regiment. Behind them: 121st brigade, 30th cdi 15th brigade. Soon after the breakthrough, the 384th Infantry Division ended up in the Kurulka area, where the Soviet 60th Infantry Division, 34th Infantry Division (5th Infantry Division) and the 12th Tank Brigade approached and where units of the 106th Infantry Division retreated.

12 The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 353

{oh \$}

.8 *99° ® in . (Avid i] e e A 8 {Kchruol.K [* v. a chr]} op> a5 subgaa `SAIK \$. Kata Yug; and 7754 Go (4 FA golo

Kopmapya for now

„) @og/o ŷ ko

Woipto C

b. \

Ha. zapgo

Mog: oh! ®

384th division in the Kharkov battle.

354

Konstantin Bykov

On May 19, in sultry heat and at a high pace of march, the division unceasingly struck at the slightly resisting enemy all the way to the Donets and occupied the Semenovka sector - the mouth of the Bereka. In the forest, on the other side of the Donets, the remnants of the enemy forces were still holding out.

On May 21, the division relieved the 14th Panzer Division of the 3rd Panzer Corps advancing on Balakleya and took over the protection of the flanks of this Panzer Division, fighting for the purpose of encirclement. First of all, on the night of May 21, the 3rd Battalion of the 536th Grenadier Battalion was thrown on trucks of the 14th Panzer Division across Petrovskoye in the direction of Protopopovka. shelf. But soon it was stopped by an attack of 30 to 40 enemy tanks? and quickly joined the fight. The 1st battalion of the 536th regiment was also pulled up here and thrown into battle right from the march. In Protopopovka, a short but fierce street battle unfolded between the attacking Austrians, the crews of bogged down enemy tanks and the weakened infantry. At 2 pm Protopopovka was in our hands.

The new task of the division was to capture the area along the Donets from the mouth of the Bereka to Chepel and defend the eastern flank of the 3rd Panzer Corps, to which it was assigned division.

On May 22, during this quiet sunny day, the large settlement of Csepel, which was located in a deep valley, was occupied. It was the calm before the storm. At midnight, two

The units of the 34th and 60th cd (5th cavalry corps), 106th, 333rd and 335th rifle divisions, as well as the fresh 92nd separate tank battalion, were located in the GV forest.

2 Regiments were renamed to grenadiers later in the Battle of Kharkov — October 1942

of the year.

3 The closest Soviet tank units to Protopopovka were: the 92nd brigade (it was located on the other side of the Donets and, obviously, did not take part in this battle), the 131st brigade of the 23rd tank squad, the 64th brigade of the 21st tank squadron. By May 21, the 198th and 199th brigade of the 21st tank corps approached this area. Most likely, the 64th brigade of the 21st TC took part in the battle near Protopopovka itself. The surviving tanks withdrew to the north and were later included in the consolidated tank corps, which tried to release the encircled in the Kharkov pocket.

355

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

defector with raised hands. They told us that the Russians were preparing an attack with tanks and infantry.' Two hours later

it looked like this: At 2.30 (May 23. - Ed.) The enemy attacked numerous

Csepel tanks from the east, they hit the village with tracer shells and set fire to many houses ... The artillery and mortars of the enemy also took part in this. Therefore, there were many losses. The [th battalion of the 536th regiment failed to hold Chepel due to the superiority of the enemy forces.

During the defense of Csepel, along with other comrades, the courageous commander of a heavy machine-gun special platoon (Masscheepgemeigsopdegtieez), Lieutenant Vetien (U/ACep), perished.

The remnants of the 1st battalion withdrew into a hollow on the western slope of the ravine, from where they had a better view and good opportunities for fire and forced the enemy infantry sitting on them to jump off the tanks. The tanks turned towards the forest, onto the transport supply route near Protopopovka. Soon Russian bombers and fighters entered the fray.

In the middle of this critical day, a reserve battalion was brought into action. The division commander, Lieutenant General Baron von Gablenz, appeared on the battlefield and personally gave the order: "Reserve battalion prepare for an attack, remnants of the 1st battalion join"

With the help of the anti-tank destroyer battalion (Raptetsagegae un?) of Hauptmann Troish (Tro1\$SP) and thanks to the courageous behavior of the gun crew of the 14th company of the 536th regiment, the enemy's breakthrough on the Protopopovka-Chepel transport supply route was prevented, and,

Commander-38 K.S. Moskalenko was going to attack Chepel with the forces of the 114th Tank Brigade, the remnants of the 64th Tank Brigade and the 242nd Rifle Division. General Sherstyuk commanded this group.

356

Konstantin Bykov

thanks to their restraint, it became possible to occupy a defensive line west of Chepel'.

16 tanks were hit. After the prisoners were taken, it turned out that it was mainly Mongolian troops who had been brought into the battle.

On May 23, the division occupied the area assigned to it and established contact with the 14th Panzer Division, which was fighting in the north. The enemy was surrounded. The division dug in and blew up the available

section of the bridges across the Donets.

The 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 534th regiment and parts of the 384th artillery regiment were temporarily assigned to the 68th Infantry Division?

Here the division found itself in a difficult position. Front lines about 22 km wide, along the Donets from Protopopovka to Chepel, a division with only seven battalions, four

' According to Moskalenko (In the South-West direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973. - P. 204): "May 22. Tank group Kleist takes possession of the settlements of Chepel, Volobuevka, Gusarovka... I arrive at the headquarters of the group of General Sherstyuk... I set the task for the group: to cross the Seversky Donets near the settlement of Savintsy and in cooperation with the reserves of the front, having defeated the enemy tank grouping in the Chepel area, to restore the communications of the 6th and 57th armies cut by it ... The group successfully crosses the river in the indicated place. On the opposite bank, it absorbs the remnants of the 64th Tank Brigade of the 23rd Tank Corps (21st Tank Corps - Auth.) and other units. With a swift attack, he takes possession of Chepel. The start is good. But then everything goes from bad to worse. The reserves of the front (the 3rd and 15th tank brigades) do not reach the Savintsy area at the appointed time. Relatively weak in composition, General Sherstyuk's group is unable to overcome the resistance of two enemy divisions, the 14th Panzer and the 384th Infantry, by its own forces alone. These divisions were turned by the front to the east in order to eliminate the bridgehead of our troops in the area of Shchurovka, Chepel and to push back the group of General Sherstyuk beyond the Seversky Donets. Such a goal - to eliminate the bridgehead - was not set before the Germans these days. Their job was to defend. In addition, in the Csepel area there were only separate parts of the indicated German divisions.

2 The first participant in the fighting in the Chepel area was the 242nd Rifle Division (presumably Colonel A.M. Kashkin), later units of the 199th Rifle Division of the 304th Rifle Division of the 38th Army were transferred here from the Chuguevsky bridgehead.

3 68th Infantry Division at that time blocked the southern coast of the Seversky Donia in the area that was previously blocked by the 384th Infantry Division - between Semenovka and the mouth of the Bereka.

357

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

with light and three heavy batteries, a sapper battalion and an anti-tank battalion, she completed the task that was assigned to her in the decisive place of the great battle south of Kharkov. Namely, to prevent an attempt to break through the encircled Soviet troops to the rear of the division, as well as to prevent enemy attempts to break through the siege from the east, where the enemy had at his disposal two more bridges across the Donets near Savintsy and especially fiercely fought back from the fighting settlement of Chepely.

The enemy was still trying to coordinate his diversionary attacks from the east with his attempts to break through from the west. During the crisis days of the battle, the division fought back to back on two fronts against vastly superior forces. This repeatedly led to bayonet battles, in which the vastly superior enemy burst into artillery positions and retreated again. To defend against the enemy coming from the pocket, the division ordered to use its last reserve to occupy the second line of defense with the front to the west.

On May 25, on Trinity Monday, the enemy managed to break through to the outskirts of Petrovskaya near the Donets, on the southeastern outskirts of which there were supply units of the division (Otsagerte1 egaMelun?). Thanks to the energetic

' Moskalenko (decree op. pp. 204-205): "All subsequent actions of the troops of the 38th Army in the area of Savintsy and Chepel, as well as the units of the 6th and 57th armies that found themselves in the enemy ring, were aimed at breaking through encirclement front. For four days, not a single such attempt

was crowned with success... The encircled were not given the opportunity to concentrate forces and carry out a breakthrough by the incessant impact of enemy ground forces and, to an even greater extent, massive air raids. As before, the operational group of our 38th Army also failed to break through to the west from the Chepel region. Here the fierce attacks and counterattacks of enemy tanks were also accompanied by incessant air strikes. Groups of enemy aircraft, replacing one another in the air, bombed the combat formations of our troops... Many soldiers of the 38th Army gave their lives trying to accomplish this task. But the forces were not enough. The enemy still had superiority in tanks and even more in aviation. This is what decides the outcome of every fight."

358

Konstantin Bykov

due to the intervention of the 4th battery and thanks to the strong attack of our aviation, the situation was restored.

The next night, the enemy managed to reach the Petrovskoye-Protopopovka supply road and temporarily interrupt the line of communication. Four tanks appeared, firing furiously at the village of Zavgorodnee, and tried to break through to the Donets. The 1st Battalion of the 534th Infantry Regiment of Hauptmann Aesch (Ec) has already reoriented the center of gravity of the defense from east to west. In the counterattack, the village was cleared, the infantry sitting on the tanks was shot down, the tanks themselves were driven onto the swampy bank of the Donets, where they got stuck and were blown up. In the northern sector of the division in the area of Csepel, the crisis also escalated significantly.

From the evening of May 25 to noon on May 26, the brave Silesians of the 535th Infantry Regiment, in cooperation with artillery and attached units of the division, repulsed 5 attacks from Csepel and from the pocket.

May 27 led to heavy defensive battles with heavy losses!, to forest battles against the enemy, who was trying to break out of the encirclement to the northeast. In fierce close combat, strong enemy troops invaded the artillery positions to finish them off. Only after an infinitely long struggle, when artillery and rifle ammunition ran out, Ober-Lieutenant Bischof (V15sBoy), after the battery commander Ober-Lieutenant Zaiko (ZashchKo) died, managed to push back the enemy with the rest of his brave gunners of the 5th battery. Despite the attacks of the enemy

! Bagramyan (So we went to victory. - M.: Voenizdat, 1977. - P. 121): "At the same time, forces were concentrated west of Lozovenka, covering the troops of the 6th Army from attacks from the west. By the morning of May 27, the 266th Rifle Division of Colonel A.I. Tavantsev also came here, which fully retained its combat capability. On the night of May 28, its units, which formed the core of the strike group, broke through the encirclement of the enemy and on May 28 the kutra reached the area of Volvenkovo, Volobuevka (i.e., the rear of the 384th infantry division in the area west of Chepel - Protopopovka. - Auth.). Together with them, the rest of the units and subunits, located west of Lozo venki, made their way here. On the night of May 29, this group, with the assistance of the troops of the 38th Army, broke through the front line of the enemy along the right bank of the Seversky Donets and successfully entered the location of the main forces of Chepel.

359

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

moviks and bombing strikes day and night - especially powerful night attacks were on May 27/28, 1942 on Petrovskoe - air superiority was clearly on the German side. After May 28, the enemy still tried to attack from Csepel, and jumps from the pocket to the division site were still intercepted, but the strength of enemy attacks from the east was broken.

From May 27, 1942 (until June 2), the supply of the division was subordinated to the 6th Army (before that - to the 44th AK). This created great difficulties. The supply units of the division, located in the south

east (Slavyansk), were to be relocated to the northwest (Andreevka) in the shortest possible time. On June 4, at the end of combat activities and the cleaning of the boiler, the division transferred its sector to the Romanian division. As a parting greeting, enemy night planes, which the soldiers dubbed "sewing machines" or "nerve saws" due to their systematic appearances and the characteristic noise of the engines, successfully dropped a couple of bombs on the night before on the divisional command post, destroying the field kitchen. Both battalions of the 534th Infantry Regiment, the 1st Battalion and the 9th Battery of the 384th Artillery Regiment were returned to the division.

On June 6, 1942, the division gathered all its troops in the Dolgenkaya area, but on June 9 it received an order to move to the Merefa area

! Gape Kai. Sesssche 4er 384. pasture-P/u1\$1op 1942 - 1944. KO, 1965.3.5-6.9-10.

257th INFANTRY DIVISION

Short story. The 257th Infantry Division was formed in 1939 as a division of the 4th wave. The main stages of the military path: 1940 - France, 1941 - San, Lvov, Umansky cauldron, Kiev cauldron, Mirgorod, Poltava, Krasnograd, Izyum, Slavyansk, Znamenka, 1942 - Kharkov cauldron, France, 1943 - Izyum, Lozovaya,

| Emblem of the 257th Dnepropetrovsk, Krivoy Rog, 1944 - Ni-VIZ

kopol, Giraspol, Bendery, death while trying to break through the Prut. As part of the 257th division included:

- 457th Infantry Regiment!

- 466th Infantry Regiment

- 477th Infantry Regiment

- 257th anti-tank battalion

- 257th reconnaissance battalion

- 257th artillery regiment

- 257th communications battalion

- 257th engineer battalion

— 257th supply battalion and other divisional units.

Presumably in the winter of 1941/42, as part of the 257th Infantry Division, on the basis of the reconnaissance department of the division headquarters, there was a fighter-counter guerrilla group (Parsen-7ser-Tarp\$). The basis for such

' The banner of this regiment was captured by Soviet soldiers during the winter Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya operation.

361

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

a =

No. EMvWEIS KEM \u003d b-. UPNMTA and SNAVCOM „, ROCTAUUA

®(KAMEMEMTSNUS

RALEMUSS

<,

4", ^ F

UKAITSAM\$ TO OMERKORETKOYEK,

ZAROKO\$NAE

PAAUROT @

Wartagy eg 257.1.0,

© o uo 50 m0 20mm t t t ia

SIA ESA i

Combat route of the 257th Infantry Division.

assumption is a secret divisional order to the intelligence department of the division headquarters with an extract from the army order on the types and forms of interrogation of partisans.

In this command:

— the sources of information about the partisans were determined (Volksdeutsche, translators, policemen, owners of apartments, etc.);

- instructions were given to draw up lists and interrogate obviously suspicious persons: people who partisans in 1917-192], chiefs and ordinary members of fire brigades (!), administrative leaders who remained in the occupation, etc.;

- instructions were given on how to conduct interrogations of suspicious persons: each question had to end with the order "Nouetge" ("Speak!"), and if no answer was received, it was necessary to hit the interrogated person 25 times with a rubber truncheon (man) or a hose (woman);

— the execution was recommended to be carried out by a shot in the back of the head according to the decision of the intelligence department (it was proposed to hang significant persons with a sign in three languages);

362

Konstantin Bykov

- the word "Partizan", which has a positive meaning among the population, was recommended to be replaced by the word "bandit";

- Attention was drawn to the fact that in no case should this order be carried with you during hostilities.

During the period of participation in the Kiev cauldron, the 257th division was commanded by General of Engineer Troops Karl Sachs (Sepega] 4er Pionere Kat! Zasss). In April 1942, Oberst Pühler (OBer\${ RasSheg) replaced him and led the division in the Battle of Kharkov. According to GekhKop-4er-Mengtasv®, from 1.05.1942 the division was commanded by Lieutenant-General Karl Gumbel (SepegaYezhpap(Kai Sitbe]), and on 1.06.1942 - General of Infantry Karl Pühler.

In May 1942, the 257th infantry division was part of the 52nd army corps (according to the version of GekhlKop-deg muegtas { - part of the 44th AK).

The starting position of the 257th division before the battle of Kharkov. April 13 - May 7, 1942. The Maisky combat area was well known to the 257th division as early as January 1942. At that time, she held the defense along the Seversky Donets between Izyum and Slavyansk in the area of Bogorodichnoye, Bannovsky (now Tatyankovka), Prishib, Sidorovo (north of Mayakov). During the Barvenkovo-Lozovskaya operation of the Soviet troops, the 257th division came under attack from units of the 57th army of D.I. Ryabyshev and retreated south - to Slavyansk and Mayaky. In the area Mayakov 257th
syg division

Order No. 1697/41 dated December 7, 1941 and 1655/41 dated December 3, 1941 (Egn & her, UI! Ogezzep - Negaizrebeg. "So shi ipz". Or de5spe Uegisap8 \$ Kpew ip Ozep 1939 - 1945. - 1989). Since the order for the division contains a reference to the army order, and in the histories of some German divisions located near Kharkov (for example, in the history of the 384th Infantry Division) there are "anti-partisan" photographs, it should be considered that the reconnaissance departments of the German front infantry divisions during periods of calm at the front performed purely Gestapo functions.

2 At the end of January 1943, the 1st Cavalry Corps of Parkhomenko, together with the 255th Rifle Division of Zamertsev, completely defeated the 457th Infantry Division, the headquarters and sapper battalion of the 257th Infantry Division, captured operational documents and a field postal station (Ryabyshev D.I. The first year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing, 1990. - S. 161).

363

kayep3A / ste 2 apog / de "tae chpa legge / -\u003e FCHRAZASUSRAIE 4er257 refii

\$ ^kletyasrelAo `,, < d T-\ dl Aeorotgonikh - 6 < 9 bek '^ > Dlelidgsle 29 TA ^ b "^^

....>

1x yela Notetia y

A

de 2)

> ^a Agomaua "-

. ^ cha ^ with and Varionizdu ^^^ ve A: , , A ^ 9 / -. > . a^: . (, ID SHCH < TEL AND r 8 9 ' a: ' ..m.a . . '

DybelAua 1 ch p "Dodogoa p. 5 , o... .27%6° ^ ri l «^ IA, , RJ, «=. <." ahh: to sid other lm: and 'uh _

d"

E p \u003d to "y" pl ^m ^ ra r: # chaU 249995 AK a AB, wu \$

...---*A

p A 660

0122 ri 92 \ lek

_____ _ No. 9) , 7 Ao , ^2.6<.

257th Infantry Division on the eve of the Battle of Kharkov.

364

Konstantin Bykov

played the same role as the 44th Infantry Division in the Balakleya area.

The attempts of the Soviet troops, which had broken through far to the west, to Lozovaya, to dislodge the Germans from Mayakov in the south and Balakleya in the north, in order to widen the throat of the so-called Barvenkovsky ledge, were unsuccessful. This failure formed the basis of the German plan to encircle our troops near Kharkov - Friederikus-1.

When, on May 12, Soviet troops, ahead of the Germans, launched an attack on Kharkov from the Barvenkovsky ledge and the Starosaltovsky bridgehead, Friederikus-1 was redesigned into Friederikus Yug - an attack on the Barvenkovsky ledge with only one, southern claw. The 257th Infantry Division, located on the right flank of the German southern grouping of troops, according to this plan, was supposed to return the positions lost in winter and, having taken up defensive positions along the Seversky Donets in its former sector, protect this grouping from possible attacks from the east.

On May 4, a tragedy occurred in the Mayakov region, which gave rise to the authors of military memoirs of the Soviet era to accuse the commander of the 9th Army, F.M. Kharitonov that his "unauthorized" attack on Mayaki led to a weakening of the defense in the direction of Barvenkovo, a breakthrough of the Soviet front and the encirclement of our armies near Kharkov.

"Ensuring the offensive of the troops of the South-Western Front on Kharkov from possible enemy strikes on Barvenkovo was entrusted to the 57th and 9th armies... Council of Divisional Commissar Konstantin Vasilievich Krainyukov, Chief of Staff Major General Fyodor Konstantinovich Korzhenevich) was ordered to firmly defend the southern and southeastern fronts of the Barvenkovo bridgehead on the front of Sofiyivka, Kantemirovka, Krasnoarmeysk, Krasny Liman with a length of 96 kilometers," - writes I.Kh. Bagramyan. And, explaining the reasons for the breakthrough of the front in the sector of the 9th Army, he reports: "Finally, and this, please.

365

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

lui, most importantly, on the initiative of General F. M. Kharitonov, approved by the front commander, without the permission of the commander-in-chief of the troops of the direction, from May 7 to 15, a private operation was carried out that did not correspond to the situation in the 9 was the capture of a heavily fortified center of resistance in the Mayakov area. For its implementation, significant forces were involved, including almost all army reserves and the 5th cavalry corps, which constituted the reserve of the front.

All these reserves, first of all, were intended to repel a possible breakthrough by the enemy of the defense of the 9th Army in the Barvenkovo direction. The operation in the Mayakov region was unsuccessful, the reserves involved in it suffered heavy losses, and by the beginning of the transition of the Kleist group to the offensive, they did not have time to regroup and take a place in the operational formation of the army for defense.

The tragedy in the Mayakov area on May 4 consisted, in our opinion, in the following:

- On May 4, a reinforced company of the 257th Infantry Division captured an important height north of Mayakov;
- The lighthouses lay on the line Krasnoarmeysk, Krasny Liman, and the height captured by the Germans was to the north of this line;
- SINCE "the 9th Army ... was ordered to firmly defend the southern and southeastern faces of the Barvenkovo bridgehead at the front ... Krasnoarmeysk, Krasny Liman ... x, then the commander of the 9th Army and the Southern Front willy-nilly, it was necessary to undertake a completely natural and absolutely appropriate operation to return the lost positions;
- the events of May 17 showed that the breakthrough of the defense front of the 9th Army did not occur in the Barvenkovo direction, where army and front reserves were concentrated, but one

Bagramyan I.Kh. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1977. - S. 73, 107.

366

Konstantin Bykov

at the same time both on the Barvenkovsky and Izyumsky directions. It was here, in the Izyum direction, the right flank of which was provided by the 257th Infantry Division, that both the auxiliary (Dolgenkaya) and the main (Kamenka) command posts of the 9th Army were located, which were defeated by the Germans on the very first day of the offensive.

Based on these circumstances, we can assume that if the private operation of the 9th Army in the Mayakov region had not been stopped by the command of the YuzN, then the troops located here in an offensive, and not in a defensive position, would have been able to quickly hit the flank of the enemy that had broken through in the Izyum direction, protecting at the same time the Soviet crossings across the Seversky Donets of Bannovsky and Bogorodichny. The difference in attacking the German defenses at Mayakov and the German troops that had entered the open field, in conditions when we still had aviation, would be significant. The delay of the "Izyum" group of Germans would not have made it possible to turn to the west and their "Barvenkov" group ...

However, from fruitless assumptions, let us turn to the facts - whom, as they were seen from the German side:

"The calm time that had begun (after the winter battles. - Auth.) was used to put the unit in order. On April 13, Lieutenant-General Zaks left the division, which he had commanded since 1941 on both good and bad days. He always commanded with diligence, with very few losses, thanks to the careful planning of each battle, as far as possible, - this is how her historian Albert Benari begins the story of the participation of the 257th Infantry Division in the Kharkov battle. In his concern for the troops, Sachs was not afraid of becoming unpopular because of unvarnished reports. His successor was already known from the days near Uman, and then from the winter battles

Vepagu ANoet. Ge Weisher Vagep-O1\u1ya0op. OCesssschsme 4er 257. sashchepe-P1\1 < 10n 1939 - 1945. Wayaz Napz-Nepsche Rod7in, Vaa MaiVeit, 1957. - 5.96.

367

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Oberst Puchler, who until now commanded the 228th Infantry Regiment ...

The enemy, apparently, withdrew the main forces of his divisions for rest and replenishment.

On April 21, despite this weakening of their infantry, the enemy captured our positions at Raygorodok, the lake collective farm and at Bylbasovka without too much effort. In the following days, enemy artillery activity and night bombardments resumed throughout the entire sector, including the city itself. Already at the end of April, meetings and reconnaissance began to change the structure of the front in our sector. This was done to introduce new divisions and prepare a large German counteroffensive, which was supposed to destroy the enemy that had broken through the Donets in winter.

First, on April 14, units of the new 384th Infantry Division were sent here, to the still quiet area (Slavyansk, west of Bylbasovka), and were assigned to the 257th Infantry Division "for training". Along with this, the division tried to refresh its own units, which were severely understrength in men, horses, motor vehicles and materials.

First of all, there were not enough people to supplement our six battalions (457 = 1; 466 = 2; 477 = 3) with a seventh (instead of the nine battalions laid down)!

Even worse were the prospects for the mobility of the division, even the arrival of OKH officers, who were supposed to help recruit the division, did not bring BENEFITS ...

On May 3, Oberst Lieutenant Goetz (commander of the 466th Infantry Regiment) was awarded the Knight's Cross for his decisive command in defensive battles on the eastern and northern fronts near Slovyansk.

Multiple small Russian attacks in the area west of Mayakov urged the division to take countermeasures. Early in the morning

| The 228th regiment was part of the 101st light infantry division.

368

Konstantin Bykov

On May 4, thanks to a completely stunning attack by a reinforced company of the 466th regiment, during a fierce battle, the dominant height 165 (E-VerO) was taken! north of Mayakov.

The ensuing counterattacks were repulsed.

After a temporary calm, on the morning of May 7, the Russians, having brought up new forces, after powerful artillery preparation and with the support of tanks and attack aircraft, attacked Hill 165. At the same time, they attacked Mayaki and our forest positions west of the village. These heavy fighting continued with varying success until 11 May. On this day, the Russians managed to throw our garrison off the high-rise, despite their courageous resistance. Due to our heavy losses in e-day battles in a tight space (91 killed and 230 wounded), we had to refuse to return the high-rise, since it was necessary to reckon with future battles, and because of the growing losses in the combat effectiveness of our own units before the upcoming - with a big offensive would be too weakened.

Thus, our countermeasures to strengthen positions in the forest area to the west of Mayakov were limited. After that, the Russians also calmed down in this sector of the front.

Is the experience in the battles for E-legK reported in the records of U.V.? 11th battery of the 257th artillery shelf:

"On the night of May 4, Lieutenant Stolze sits with his radio operator in the forward trench next to our infantry. Yesterday he received a detailed assignment from the unit commander, which he is now considering again:

"2.45 - fire strike. 260 shots.

2.47 - the fire is transferred 100 meters forward.

2.49 - another 100-meter jump, and during this you need to have time to move towards the barbed wire - get through it!"

G E-Yegk - power plant. On modern maps to the north of Mayakov, in the area of \u200b\u200bheight 165.1, an electrical substation is indicated. Obviously, this is the area in question. On German wartime maps, this height is designated as height 165.5.

IV. - advanced observation (reconnaissance) post, target designation and artillery fire adjustment post.

369

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

They spoke little and very quietly. Someone has lit a cigarette and carefully blows it around. "How will it go this time?" There is still one hour before the attack, one hour that stretches unbelievably, lengthens, and this tension can hardly be endured. "If only we were at home now!" The terrain gives the Russians many advantages, but everything should work out! Everything in the burrows is damp. From time to time shells fall nearby. 02.20. In the distance, the chugging of a locomotive can be heard. There is a path leading to vacation. Vacation? We haven't been home in such a long time. They are definitely still sleeping. Don't think about it! A few meters from us sits the enemy, which must be driven back today! Here and there, a soft crack is heard. The infantry fixed their bayonets and got ready for that one moment when the soldier no longer thinks about his Motherland or his loved ones. Another second, and the command sounds: "Sprunhauf! March, march! ("Jump up! Forward!"). The silence is broken by the thunder of guns, and the first shells are already bursting among the Russians. Five minutes, as if a giant is beating the timpani, then a signal rocket takes off into the air: "Move the fire into the depths of the enemy's defense! We're attacking!"

The gray figures lifted off the ground. Machine guns crackle. Hand grenades explode. "Hooray!"

The fight lasted five minutes—five short and yet such long minutes. E-YerK is in our hands. 85 prisoners were taken. The rest were left in ruins. 85 prisoners were supposed to immediately bring us ammunition. Then we looked around. Among the destroyed buildings lie, since the winter, 200 dead Russians. O

When the Bolsheviks recovered from the sudden shock, an infernal barrage broke out. With artillery of all calibers, mortars and anti-aircraft guns, the Russians beat the ruins of buildings for three days and three nights. Then, on the morning of May 7, the Russian counterattack begins. She is preceded by

Lighthouses are located 5 - 6 km north of Slavyansk - a large railway node.

370

Konstantin Bykov

was a fire attack from a rocket battery, whose firing resembles the unceasing roar of a hurricane.

Wave after wave, supported by tanks of all types and sizes, rolled into our thin infantry line. The heavy machine guns of our fierce infantry laid down the Russians sheaf after sheaf. Our battery has silenced eight guns, and now its shells are exploding among the advancing Russians. The 500th battalion, again brought into battle, is also fighting hard here. Gradually run out of ammunition. E-U\elK can no longer be held. Russian pressure is constantly increasing, and there is a danger of encirclement. And the infantry received an order to retreat ...

Despite these battles, our preparations for an offensive with a limited purpose had to continue.

257th Infantry Division in the Battle of Kharkov. May 17 - 19. Contrary to popular belief, the German divisions did not attempt to cross the Seversky Donets in the area from Mayakov to Izyum. Their task was more modest - to block the river in this area and prevent the transfer of fresh Soviet troops to the Barvenkovsky bridgehead.

"The high command intended with a pincer attack:

In all likelihood, we are talking about the 500th special-purpose infantry battalion, which is part of the 52nd AK - shashepe-BaaShop 7.6.U. 500, which belonged to the so-called Ve\mavgapezbaaShope - "correctional battalions". Bagramyan writes that the 500th battalion was penalized. However, this is not quite true. Convicts served in the "corrective battalions". However, they served on a voluntary basis, and in a special order for the creation of such units, it was emphasized that Vemavgitearre was by no means Ztaygiarre. The 500th battalion consisted of three rifle companies, a machine gun company, a headquarters company, an anti-tank missile platoon, and an engineer platoon.

Approximately half of the soldiers who fell into this battalion during the war years were killed. Several platoons of the 500th battalion were staffed by demoted officers and non-commissioned officers. Battle path of the 500th battalion: 1941 - Galicia, Kharkov; 1942 - Kharkov, Caucasus; 1943 - Kuban, Melitopol, Zaporozhye; 1944 - Nikolaev, Lvov, Carpathians; 1945 - Tatra, Moravia.

2 Vepagu Afet. Gle Veysteg Wagep-O1u1z1opt. Oezsysche 4er 257. paschepe-Omz1op 1939 - 1945. - 5.96 - 99.

371

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

1) from the area around and west of Slavyansk with a blow to the northwest

2) and from the area around Taranovka (40 km south of Kharkov) with a blow to the southeast, west of the Donets, both blows in the direction of Izyum - to destroy the enemy who broke through in the winter, writes Benari. "But the enemy got ahead of us: on May 9, he himself launched a spring offensive from both sides of Kharkov with the intention of encircling the German troops and, after their destruction, developing a breakthrough to the Dnieper."

On May 16, the enemy units leading the offensive were already in front of Merefa (25 km south of Kharkov) and near Karlovka (40 km east of Poltava!).

Because of these battles, the formations of the 6th Army, which were supposed to be used for pincer coverage from the north, were completely connected, and interaction with them in the general operation should have been abandoned. Despite this, the German command made a bold decision: to carry out the envisaged offensive to envelop the enemy only unilaterally, only from the south. And one day earlier than planned, that is, already May 17th.

"Based on the available information about the terrain and the experience of winter battles, our division was given the right to give proposals and data on the initial area of concentration of formations participating in the future offensive. Command of the 49th? and the 52nd army corps, along with the commanders and [huh? 257th Infantry Division carried out a second topography terrain...

The greatest concern for the division was the mobility of the artillery, which had to not only regroup on short notice, but also follow the division on the offensive. This task was successfully solved, despite the fact that there were only enough horse teams for two

' The Soviet offensive began on 12 May. In the histories of some German divisions, it is reported that the Soviet air offensive began on May 9th.

2 Obviously, this is a mistake. It should be about the 44th Army Corps. 3 [a - operational department of the headquarters.

372

Konstantin Bykov

heavy and two light batteries. The prolonged onslaught of the enemy in the area west of Mayakov forced us to change the plans of our artillery deployment. Some batteries during the last night were to take up positions 1.5 km behind the forward defensive positions.

But the mobility of the infantry with its heavy weapons and all the necessary equipment was extremely limited. Since the target of the attack was only 20 km away, these restrictions were only taken into account. As part of this operation - "Friederikus-1" - the 257th Infantry Division, as part of the 52nd Army Corps, was to advance to the right of the 101st Infantry Division, with the aim of:

"Holding the front at the Donets from the mouth of the Torets to Mayakov (457th infantry regiment), from Mayakov (466th checkpoint) and the forest outskirts west of Mayakov (477th checkpoint), speaking to the north-west, break through the enemy forest positions, win the heights southeast and south of Bogorodichny, in order to block the crossing over the Donets located there, clear the western bank of the Donets from the enemy and move on to the defense of this coast! The necessity of advancing to a depth of 8-10 km inside rich in ravines and heavily forested terrain, in which the Russians, masters of land fortifications and camouflage, had been digging in for a month, presented the division, with its exhausted and understaffed units, with a difficult task. Careful planning of artillery support for the advancing troops and fire cover for the front held along the Donets provided for: concentrated fire at the beginning of the attack on

The Kazenny Torets River, flowing south of Slavyansk, flows into the Seversky Donets near Raygorodok. Lighthouses are located northwest of Raygorodok. This section between Raigorodok and Mayaki was controlled by both Soviet and German troops and was to be blocked by one regiment of the 257th Infantry Division. Further, up the Seversky Donets, there are the settlements of Prishib, Bogorodichnoye and Izyum. This sector was occupied by the troops of the Soviet 9th Army and was a deep rear for the troops of the 6th Soviet Army, the Bobkin group, and the troops of the 57th Army of Podlas, who had gone almost 200 km to the west, holding the front near Lozova. Two regiments of the 257th division were to capture the area from Mayakov to Bogorodichny and block the Seversky Donets in this area.

373

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the most important enemy positions, especially along the well-known height 165, the suppression of enemy artillery and the suppression of a possible attack from the eastern bank of the Donets, as well as the support of infantry by numerous U.V. in the forest battle.

Moreover, it was envisaged that the first phase of the attack would be supported by aircraft.

On May 17 at 03.05, in clear weather and clear visibility, our attack began.

In the Mayakov sector, the enemy offered fierce resistance to the 466th Infantry Regiment; To the west of the settlement, our attack fell on one selected assault battalion, which had taken its starting position! due to which the battle became tough (450 dead Russians were counted in this area). Moving forward, step by step, in constant duels, the enemy was thrown back. In dense thickets, overcoming heavily mined tree barriers, the regiment fought against a staunch enemy.

The feeling that one could wrest the initiative from the enemy with a large offensive gave the troops - coupled with the awareness acquired in winter battles of their superiority in battle and the superiority of command - an offensive impulse, which was especially necessary for such a difficult task.

Thus, in the exemplary interaction of all weapons and aviation, the division managed to ACHIEVE before dark:

466th pp = lines: height, in | km north of Sidorovo, up to 1 km south of Bannovsky.

477th pp \u003d left wing of the height between the Vistula beam and Bogorodichny.

The hope of the advancing division to take this settlement into its own hands by the evening was wrecked because of the STATE OF THE TROOPS.

| 51igt- Wai. - can be translated both as "attacking battalion" and as "first echelon battalion". Possibly, we are talking about a battalion of the 78th rifle brigade located in this area.

374

Konstantin Bykov

On May 18, with the support of their own aviation, the 3rd battalion of the 477th regiment (formerly the garrison of this settlement) took Bogorodichnoye and rich trophies. Before dark, Bannovsky was taken with a fight and, without resistance, Prishib.

The divisional command post, which at the beginning of the offensive was located in Kurort (with a water tower as an excellent observation post) was moved to the Krestishche forestry.

On May 19, the mopping up of the western coast in our area was basically completed. In three days it was captured:

- 950 prisoners,
- 15 tanks (including 11 intact),
- 12 guns of various calibers and numerous heavy weapons.

Own losses were, fortunately, only 261 people.

The participation of the 477th Infantry Regiment in these battles is described by its commander, Oberst Taiglichsbeck (Taerchiszesk), who, shortly after they were completed, received another appointment and transferred command to Major Garshaus (NaarBam\$):

"Early in the morning of May 17, the regiment stood in the south-west of Mayakov, ready for the offensive, echeloned in three battalions:

- 1st battalion in the southwestern corner from Mayakov;
- the 2nd battalion adjoined on the left;
- The 3rd battalion in the forest northeast of Karpovka.

Each battalion was given a platoon from the 13th regimental artillery company, the 14th anti-tank company and one engineer platoon for mine clearance.

In front of the regiment lay a deaf 9-km forest. Only by the compass needles it was possible to keep the north-western direction in this forest.

At 03.15, after artillery preparation and with the support of Shtuk, the regiment, being to the right of the 101st Infantry Division, attacked the enemy positions near the forest. At first, the Soviets offered stiff resistance. Fighting, very slowly, battalion

375

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

won territory. There were fights everywhere. In addition, the temperature rose in the middle of the day to +30 degrees Celsius. So even in the forest oppressive heat prevailed. The advance detachment of the 1st battalion suddenly hit the firing battery. With a loud "Hurrah!" arrows rushed forward, gunners fled headlong... Another battery fell into the hands of the 2nd battalion. When the opposite edge of the forest was reached, it began to get dark. The troops were glad that they managed to capture even the heights to the north ... It became extremely cold at night. The headquarters and part of the regiment had to unite in the forest, as the shots were still heard.

On May 18, at 05.45, the Stuk attack on Bogorodichnoe. At the same time, the 3rd battalion stormed the settlement, which it had already occupied in the winter. Ober-lieutenant Gust (C\$0) as a battalion commander, together with the forward platoon, was the first to reach the outskirts of the settlement. The Soviets returned fire. When the entire battalion attacked the settlement from the front and flank, then,

Although tanks were still roaring in the village, the resistance was broken. After a strong battle for the settlement, the advanced units reached the Donets at the crossing point, from which the ferry with 30 horses was just about to depart. Other ferries, overtaken by the Stuk attacks, were carried away burning down the river. 13 tanks, 10 guns, 27 tractors, 1 anti-tank gun, [an infantry gun, 16 trucks and 600 prisoners were left in our hands.

Much attention was paid to the captured banner of one Soviet tank regiment.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion also reached the river. The regiment was then:

- 1st battalion in the Prishib area,
- The 2nd battalion adjoined on the left, in the Bannovsky area - a rest house,
- 3rd battalion in Bogorodichnoye.

About the adventures of the 466th Infantry Regiment during the onset

376

Konstantin Bykov

we read from Lieutenant Tauber (TeiBeg) of a bitter battle:

"On May 17, we launched an attack. We attacked the area of the initial concentration of the Russians and found there a well-equipped system of positions, which was carefully, with special care, camouflaged. Almost 40 batteries effectively supported us! and "Pieces". Army 2-cm anti-aircraft guns going in front on self-propelled gun carriages also helped us excellently.

During the capture of the collective farm near Mayakovo, simultaneous furious fire from German and Russian artillery broke out, and it was precisely at the moment when we jumped into the Russian trenches. We were not able to completely capture these shelters right away and sat shoulder to shoulder with the Russians in the trenches, doing nothing to each other. Only half an hour later, when the artillery activity weakened, we demanded that the Russians surrender.

With further advance along the apiary and through the Mayakovsky forest in the direction of Sidorov, we took by surprise about 10 Russian field kitchens with all their provisions and captured vehicles in one hollow. For us, this is a very desirable trophy. Shortly before arriving at Sidorovo, we were attacked by a Russian biplane, which we forced with our infantry weapons to land at a distance of 200 meters from us. We surrounded him, although he was still trying to fight back with the machine gun mounted on him. Two people jumped out of the car, an officer and a woman, both in leather jackets, and in order not to surrender

| 40 batteries - that's exactly what the original says - obviously, this is a typo.

2 Paul Carell (The Road to Nowhere: The Wehrmacht and the Eastern Front. — Smolensk: Rusich, 2003, p. 249), describing the same episodes, reports that after the shelling ceases, "the Russians, having abandoned their machine guns, raise their hands." Carell ends the episode about the field kitchens like this: "Soviet cooks ... chuckling, serve the "Germans" full aluminum plates of millet porridge, fill flasks with greenish aromatic tea."

377

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

to be taken prisoner, both of them, before we reached them, immediately shot themselves ...

We occupied Sidorovo and positions on the heights near the Donets. The retreating Russians, whom we could observe, were continuously attacked by our pilots...

The time that followed after these battles was occupied by the defense near the Donets and passed under the sign of additional rest and resupplying. The marching battalion approached with recruits went to study "...

Opponents of the 257th Infantry Division in the Battle of Kharkov according to American and Russian sources. Since the structure of the story about the battle has a divisional (relative to the Germans) character in our country, it is very easy to be misled about the total superiority of our troops over German.

On May 17, the 257th Infantry Division attacked the 333rd Infantry Division of Major General Ya.S. Dashevsky?, to the east of which, beyond the Donets, was the 78th rifle brigade, to the west - the 51st rifle division. Behind the positions of the 333rd rifle division were the 12th brigade, the 15th brigade and the 30th cd of the 5th kk. And behind the positions of the 51st SD - the 121st brigade. With all these Soviet formations, to a greater or lesser extent, the 257th Infantry Division faced. However, does this mean Soviet superiority?

If we go beyond the scope of hostilities purely by the 257th Infantry Division, then we will see that the 333rd Division was hit by two non-

! Paul Carell (op. cit. p. 249) writes that the biplane attacked the resting place of the battalion of the 257th Infantry Division and was shot down by small arms from Teuber's company. The Soviet pilots shot themselves, having used up all the machine-gun ammunition. The navigator shot himself first (a girl with the rank of junior lieutenant), and then the pilot.

2 Vepagu Alibet. Ge VegSpeg VaAgenp-Puu 1\$1op. Cezsysche 4er 257. shashepe-Bly1\$1op 1939 - 1945. - 5.99 - 103.

3 Glantz reports that 10% of the 333rd Rifle Division were veterans, the rest were young recruits and a large number of pop-KazZap (Apaotu oga Mitsagu O\ vazet. 5. 100).

378

Konstantin Bykov

German divisions - 257th pdi [01st lpd. If we add to this that ONE REGIMENT OF Dashevsky's DIVISION was in the Barvenkovo reserve, then the German superiority in this sector of the front is obvious. It was no better at the site of the 51st Rifle Division of Lieutenant Colonel B.K. Aliyev, who also came under attack from two German divisions - the 97th lpd of the 384th infantry division.

As for the Soviet tank brigades, which were located north of the front line, it should be taken into account that the German 16th tank division was immediately introduced into the breakthrough in the Izyum direction, and the 14th tank division and the tank regiment of the 60th tank division in the Barvenkovsky direction. infantry motorized division. These 166 tanks (according to FI)! 52 Soviet tanks of the 12th, 15th and 121st tank brigades of the 9th Army, sandwiched between them, opposed. In other words, on the right wing (257th Infantry Division and 101st Infantry Division) of the German strike group, the numerical superiority in infantry was double or triple in favor of the Germans. And our tank brigades, which were supposed to assist the infantry, were faced with more than triple the German tank superiority.

The day of May 17 ended with the withdrawal of units of the 51st Rifle Division, the 15th Tank Brigade, the 30th Cavalry Division and the 121st Tank Brigade to the northeast, to the Seversky Donets. At the same time, in the Bogorodichny area, that is, directly in the offensive zone of the 257th Infantry Division, there were units of the 333rd Rifle Division, the 51st Rifle Division of the 15th Tank Brigade. The Germans, as Bagramyan reports on May 17: "They tried to reach the crossings across the Seversky Donets near Bogorodichny and Bannovsky, but these intentions did not work out for the Nazis ... The enemy's persistent desire to break through to the crossings across the Seversky Donets in the named areas disrupted parts of the 333rd and 51 th Infantry Division.

According to Glantz, these 52 Soviet tanks were opposed not by 166, but by 230 German tanks (KVa! gKou 1942. We consider the American data to be more accurate, because in preparing for Operation Friederikus-1, the Germans were primarily concerned with recruiting mobile units. And the fact that the operation began a day earlier does not change anything — the tank divisions were fully equipped and combat-ready. As well as fresh infantry divisions (384th, 71st etc.), in contrast to the "old" ones (257th, 294th, etc.).

379

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

On May 18, according to the maps of Glantz!, the 121st brigade, the 15th brigade and the 30th cd were already beyond the Seversky Donets. And, as far as we understand, already without tanks. "Parts of the 30th Cavalry Division of Colonel V.S. Golovsky, the remnants of the 12th, 15th, 121st tank brigades and the 51st rifle division withdrew fighting to the line of the Seversky Donets and until the end of the day stubbornly resisted the enemy pressing from all sides near the villages of Studenok and Bogorodichnoye," Bagramyan reports. . To this it must be added that Studenok (51st Rifle Division, 30th Rifle Division) was attacked by the 101st Infantry Division, Ana Bogorodichne (15th Tank Brigade and 121st Tank Brigade) - by the 257th Infantry Division. 333rd SDI 12th brigade on the maps of Glantz is no longer are noted.

On May 19, the 296th infantry division of the 3rd brigade approached the Soviet bank of the Donets from the reserve. The 15th and 121st brigade, according to the maps of Glantz, were withdrawn even deeper to the rear. Obviously, the surviving personnel of these brigades departed for new tanks.

"In addition to the personnel who swam across the Seversky Donets, in three tank brigades (12th, 15th, 121st) only 7 T-60 tanks survived, left to defend the crossing. 6 KV, 18 T-34, 17 T-60 and 3 R"Krem Sh were either destroyed by the enemy or blown up by their crews during the retreat. Another 15 KV, 9 T-34s and 5 T-60s were waiting to be sent for repairs in the Barvenkovo, Bogorodichnoye area and were also destroyed during the retreat, FI reports. - During the period from May 17 to May 19, tank brigades (12, 15, 121st) knocked out and destroyed 24 enemy tanks (among them one captured KV tank used by the Germans), up to 20 vehicles with infantry and shot down one aircraft.

The 296th Rifle Division with the 3rd Tank Brigade, which was supposed to cross over to the right bank of the Sev. Donets and to reinforce units of the 51st Rifle and 30th Cavalry Divisions in the Studenok area, this task was not completed on May 18. The troops occupying the bridgehead on the right bank of the North. Donets in the Studenok area, by 9 o'clock on May 19, under pressure from the enemy, they retreated to the left bank of the river. By the end of May 19

'Slaph Rama M. Atsaz an4 Zigueu. Tve So\1e{ KVagKou OYepyaue, 12 - 29 May 1942.

380

Konstantin Bykov

& y

"g *. - -^

and E.);

{= ro : m - (>

Studenok - Apiary. The site of the 101st Light Infantry Division, the northern neighbor of the 257th Division (photo by a German air reconnaissance).

the remnants of the troops of the 9th Army retreated to the left bank of the North. Donets, where they took up defense "...

Since May 20, beyond the Donets, opposite the site of the 257th Infantry Division, nothing new has happened. Her opponents were still the 78th Infantry Brigade and units of the 296th Rifle Division. The war on this sector of the front assumed, on both sides, the character of a "watch on the Donets". On May 23, there were already 29 tanks in the 15th brigade, and the remnants of the headquarters of the 121st tank brigade were used to control the newly created independent tank corps. Based on this, it can be assumed that the banner of the tank regiment, inherited by the 257th Infantry Division, belonged either to the 1st [21st, or 12th brigade.

What information to believe, ours: "exploded by their crews during the retreat", or German: "in three days it was captured: ... 15 tanks (among them 11 undamaged)", - it is difficult say...

APPLICATION

Directive No. 41

Führer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces OKW (Operational Command Headquarters) No. 55616/42

Owls. secret. Only for command

Führer's Headquarters

5/4/1942

The winter campaign in Russia is drawing to a close. Thanks to the outstanding courage and readiness of the soldiers of the Eastern Front for self-sacrifice, the defense of our positions was crowned with a great success of German weapons.

The enemy suffered huge losses in men and equipment. In an effort to capitalize on an apparent initial success, he used up most of the reserves earmarked for further operations this winter.

Given the superiority of the German command and German troops, we must again seize the initiative and impose our will on the enemy as soon as weather and terrain conditions permit.

The goal is to finally destroy the forces still at the disposal of the Soviets and deprive them, as far as possible, of the most important military and economic centers.

To this end, all troops available to our armed forces and the armed forces of the allies will be used. At the same time, the areas we occupy in the west and north of Europe, especially the coast, must be protected under all circumstances.

382

Konstantin Bykov

1. GENERAL PURPOSE

The general original plans for the campaign in the East remain in place; the main task is to, while maintaining a position in the central sector, take Leningrad in the north and establish contact on land with the Finns, and make a breakthrough to the Caucasus on the southern flank of the front.

This task can be accomplished only by dividing it into several stages, since it is necessary to take into account the situation that has developed after the end of the winter campaign, the availability of forces and means, as well as transport capabilities.

Therefore, first of all, all available forces should be concentrated to carry out the main operation in the southern sector in order to destroy the enemy to the west.

Don, in order to then capture the oil-bearing regions in the Caucasus and cross the Caucasian ridge.

The final encirclement of Leningrad and the capture of Ingermanland are postponed until a change in the situation in the area of encirclement or the release of other forces sufficient for this create appropriate opportunities.

P. CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS

A. The primary task of the ground forces and aviation after the end of the period of thaw is to create conditions for the implementation of the main operation.

This requires the stabilization and strengthening of the entire Eastern Front and the rear areas with the task of freeing up as many forces as possible for the main operation, while at the same time being able to repel the enemy offensive with small forces on the remaining fronts. |

Where offensive operations with a limited purpose are to be carried out for this purpose, at my direction, it must also be ensured in all cases that all available offensive ground air forces are used to achieve quick and decisive successes by superior forces. Only in this way, already before the start of major operations this spring, will our troops be strengthened with unshakable confidence in victory, and the enemy troops will be convinced that we have overwhelming superiority.

B. Subsequent tasks within the framework of these operations: clear the Kerch Peninsula from the enemy in the Crimea and capture Sevast

383

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

field. In order to create conditions for these operations, aviation, and after that the navy, should block the ports of the Black Sea and the Kerch Strait.

In the south, the enemy, wedged in on both sides of the Izyum, should be cut off by the bunk. Donets and destroyed.

The operations that are necessary to level the front line in its central and northern sectors can be developed and carried out only after the end of the ongoing hostilities and the period of thaw. However, as soon as the situation permits, the forces necessary for this must be detached from the front.

B. The main operation on the Eastern Front. Its goal, as already indicated, is to defeat and destroy the Russian troops located in the Voronezh region, to the south of it, as well as to the west and north of the river. Don. Due to the fact that the connections necessary for this will come only gradually, this operation breaks up into a series of successive but interconnected strikes that complement each other. Therefore, they should be distributed in time from north to south in such a way that in each of these attacks on the decisive axes as much as possible forces of both the land army and especially aviation are concentrated.

In view of the fact that the insensitivity of the Russians to operational encirclement has now become quite clear, the main attention (as was the case in both battles in the Vyazma and Bryansk regions) should be given to individual breakthroughs with the aim of densely encircling enemy groupings.

It must be avoided that, as a result of the too late approach of troops intended for encirclement, the enemy has the opportunity to avoid this encirclement.

It should not be allowed that, due to the too rapid advance of tanks and motorized troops to a great depth, contact is lost with the infantry following them; It is also impossible to allow a situation where tank and motorized troops themselves lose the ability to provide direct assistance to infantry advancing with heavy fighting by delivering blows to the rear of the enemy in pincers.

Consequently, regardless of the main operational goal, one should always set oneself the task of destroying the attacked enemy, and this goal should be reflected in the very organization of the offensive and the use of troops.

384

Konstantin Bykov

The beginning of this entire operation should be an enveloping offensive or breakthrough from the area south of Orel in the direction of Voronezh. Of the two groupings of armored and motorized troops intended for an enveloping maneuver, the northern must be stronger than the southern. The purpose of this breakthrough is to capture the city of Voronezh. While part of the infantry divisions will have as their task the immediate construction of a powerful defensive line from the initial offensive area (Orel) in the direction of Voronezh, tank and motorized formations will have to continue the offensive with their left flank from Voronezh along the river. Don to the south to interact with troops making a breakthrough from about Kharkov to the east. And here the main task is not to force the Russians to move their front, but to destroy the Russian forces in cooperation with those who strike down the river. Don motorized connections.

The third offensive within the framework of this operation must be organized in such a way that the forces striking down the river. Don, united in the Stalingrad region with those forces that are advancing from the Taganrog, Artemovsk region between the lower reaches of the river. Don and Voroshilovgrad across the river. Donets to the east. These forces should then link up with the tank army advancing on Stalingrad.

If during this operation, especially as a result of the capture of undestroyed bridges, it will be possible to create bridgeheads east or south of the river. Don - it must be used. In any case, it is necessary to try to reach Stalingrad, or at least expose it to our heavy weapons, so that it loses its importance as a center of war industry and a hub of communications.

In particular, it is desirable either to capture the undestroyed bridges in Rostov itself, or to firmly seize the bridgeheads south of the river. Don to continue operations scheduled for the next period. | |

In order to prevent the majority of those located north of the river. Don Russian forces to move south across the river, it is important that the group advancing from the Taganrog region to the east receive reinforcements on its right flank - tanks and motorized units; if necessary, they can be used to create movable

groups.

13 The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 385

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

During these operations, it is necessary not only to take into account the need to ensure the northeastern flank of the advancing troops, but also to immediately begin equipping positions on the river. Don. Particularly great importance should be attached to the creation of a powerful anti-tank defense. Positions must be equipped with regard to their possible use in winter and provided with all the means required for this.

To occupy positions on this stretched along the river. The Don front, which will constantly increase as operations are deployed, will primarily be allocated to Allied formations in order to use German troops to create a powerful barrier between Orel and Ir. Don, as well as on the Stalingrad isthmus; Separate released German divisions should be concentrated as a mobile reserve behind the front line on the river. Don.

The allied troops must be distributed among our positions in such a way that the Hungarians are located in the northernmost sectors, then the Italians, and the ru Myny farthest to the southeast.

D. To achieve the goal of the operation, it is necessary to ensure the rapid advance of troops beyond the river. Don to the south, as this is forced by a short duration of favorable time

of the year.

S. AVIATION

Along with the direct support of the ground forces, the task of aviation is to strengthen air cover for the deployment area of Army Group South. In particular, this applies to railway bridges across the river. Dnieper.

If it is established that the enemy is concentrating his forces for an offensive, it is necessary to paralyze his communications and railways leading to the battle area. To do this, first of all, destroy the railway bridges across the river. Don.

Before the start of the operation, use concentrated strikes to ensure the destruction of enemy aircraft and its airfields in the area of offensive operations.

Consideration should be given to the possibility of rapidly redeploying aviation to the central and northern sectors of the front; to do this, if possible, preserve existing airfields.

386

Konstantin Bykov

GU. NAVY

In the Black Sea, the main task of the navy, insofar as the available warships and patrol ships, as well as the tonnage of cargo ships, is to partially take over the supply of supplies for the ground forces and aviation.

In view of the fact that the Russian Black Sea Fleet has still retained its combat effectiveness, it is especially important to quickly put light warships transferred to the Black Sea on combat readiness.

The safety of navigation in the Baltic Sea must be ensured by the blockade of Russian naval forces in the inner part of the Gulf of Finland.

At

Once again I remind all authorities involved in the preparation of operations of my instructions regarding the preservation of secrecy. I will give additional instructions on the nature of relations with the allies.

At

On the plans for the preparation of the three branches of the armed forces for the planned operations and on the course of its implementation, report to me through the OKW.

Signature: Adolf Hitler.

Message from the Sovinformburo dated May 17 Operational summary for May 17

At the last hour

SUCCESSFUL OFFENSIVE OF OUR TROOPS IN THE KHARKOV DIRECTION

On May 12, our troops, having gone on the offensive in the Kharkov direction, broke through the defenses of the German troops and, having repulsed the counterattacks of large tank formations and motorized infantry, are advancing to the West.

Derr G. Campaign to Stalingrad. - M.: Voenizdat, 1957. - P. 128. Directive No. 41 is the original German document for the spring-summer campaign of 1942.

387

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

During the period from May 12 to May 16, our units advanced to a depth of 20-60 kilometers and liberated over 300 settlements.

During the said period, according to preliminary data, our troops CAPTURED the following trophies from the enemy: guns - 365, tanks - 25, mortars - 188, machine guns - 379, shells - 46413 and separately 89 boxes with shells, mines - 23284, cartridges - about 1,000,000 pieces, grenades - 13,000, vehicles - 90, radio stations - 29, artillery, food and clothing stores - 38.

Over 200 enemy soldiers and officers were captured.

During the same time, DESTROYED: 400 German tanks, 210 guns, 33 mortars, 217 machine guns, about 700 vehicles, more than 100 cargo carts, 12 different warehouses, 147 aircraft.

Destroyed about 12 thousand German soldiers and officers.

The attack continues.

SOVINFORMBURO

Message from the Soviet Information Bureau dated May 31 Operational summary for May 31

ABOUT THE BATTLE ON THE KHARKOV DIRECTION

Some time ago, the Soviet High Command became aware of the plans of the German command for the upcoming major offensive of the Nazi troops on one of the sectors of the Rostov Front. On this sector of the front, the German command concentrated at least 30 infantry divisions, 6 tank divisions and a large number of artillery and aircraft. In order to prevent and frustrate the blow of the Nazi troops, the Soviet Command launched an offensive in the Kharkov direction, while in this operation the capture of Kharkov was not included in the plans of the Command.

For two weeks, fierce battles took place on this sector of the front.

Now that the fighting has come to an end, it can be said that the main task set by the Soviet Command - to prevent and frustrate the strike of the German fascist troops - has been completed. In the course of the fighting, the fascist German troops lost at least 90 thousand soldiers and officers, 540 tanks, at least 1500

388

Konstantin Bykov

guns, up to 200 aircraft. Our troops in these battles lost up to 5 thousand people killed, 70 thousand people missing, 300 tanks, 832 guns and 124 aircraft.

The command of the German army paints the battles near Kharkov as their major victory, and at the same time reports fantastic numbers of allegedly captured Soviet soldiers and destroyed Soviet equipment. In response to these fabrications, we can only say: a few more such German "victories" and the German fascist army will be completely drained of blood.

SOVINFORMBURO

Diary of a Battalion Commander of the 294th Infantry Division

REPORTS OF THE NKVD SWF TO THE UOO NKVD OF THE USSR WITH EXTRACTS OF THE DIARY OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE WEhrmacht

June 20, 1942 Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR Commissar of State Security of the 3rd rank Cde. Abakumov!

During the battles in the Kharkov direction, among other documents, the NKVD OO of the 38th Army seized the diary of a German army captain - commander of a battalion of the 294th Infantry Division, which occupied the village of Peschanoe. His last name could not be established.

In the diary, special attention is drawn to those places where the author emphasizes that the defectors - traitors to the Motherland revealed to the Germans the plans of the offensive being prepared, gave information about the forces that were gathered for this offensive. The author also involuntarily emphasizes a number of weaknesses of the Nazi troops, speaks of the unbearable living conditions of Soviet people in the occupied territory.

The author of the diary, as can be seen from its first part, before his transfer to the Eastern Front was part of the garrison of some

'Aba Kumov V.S. (1908 - 1954) - in 1941 - 1943. Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, Head of the Department of Special Departments of the NKVD of the USSR, since 1943 Head of the Main Department of Counterintelligence "Smersh" of the NPO of the USSR, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR.

389

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

islands in the West. To make up for the loss of command personnel in the East, he was urgently promoted to captain and sent to the Eastern Front.

Below are the most interesting passages from the diary:

"... In Przemyśl, I met an old comrade from the 16th Infantry Regiment, who told me about the battles of the regiment located in front of Sevastopol. They have been through a lot and suffered huge losses.

From Przemyśl we drove through Ukraine. Here it is, Russia. Distant, immeasurably huge fields, not cultivated. There is no forest, only sometimes a few trees. Sad collective farms with destroyed houses. A few people, dirty and wrapped in rags, stood with indifferent faces near the railroad. The roads are so muddy that the axles of carriages get stuck in the mud. There are few traces of the war, only the consequences of dive-bomber raids are visible near the station: burnt buildings and depots, overturned freight cars, from which only skeletons remain.

From April 12 to April 15, the trip to Kharkov continued. She was made pleasant by the interesting conversations that I had with Oberleutnant Bandele from the transport workers. Unfortunately, he was a clearly expressed pessimist and, with all his intelligence, saw only negative aspects.

this war. Regarding the use of Ukraine for our own subsistence, he, referring to serious sources, said that for many years there was nothing to think about this. Based on my own observations, I could only agree with him. He also talked about the great concern that the influence and importance of the SS inspire in us all. It will forever remain incomprehensible that next to the army, which, after all, should be the only carrier of weapons for the motherland, there is a second organization with similar tasks. However, this is how the Germans are arranged: as soon as we came to unity, we ourselves created a new duality, which can be the basis for a new violation of unity. There is already talk at home that when the victorious army returns home, it will be disarmed by the SS on the border.

If in reality things are unlikely to turn out so badly, then nevertheless these conversations indicate a general line of thought, from the implementation of which may the Lord preserve us, since then the most terrible thing that the history of the world has ever seen would flare up.

390

Konstantin Bykov

Finally, however, we arrived in Kharkov. It was completely dark, you could barely see the outstretched hand, there was no light on the streets, we groped our way to the front-line stage. There we spent the night in a miserable little room on a straw sack, covered with an overcoat. In the morning a young Russian prisoner of war brought us water for washing, a bucket for four. We were already happy, getting ready to drink coffee, but it turned out to be terrible.

Then I reported to my division, had lunch and spent the evening with a lieutenant, the commander of a motorcade, who told me in detail about his experiences in Russia. In particular, he told me about the terrible fighting that the 294th Infantry Division endured in the last days of March, when the Russians could easily recapture Kharkov with a slightly greater impulse. However, once again this was prevented, the positions were held with heavy own losses.

Again and again I had to listen to what mistakes in the middle and high command were the cause of these losses ...

After a night spent in a real bed, on the morning of the 16th, as the division commander, General Neiling, I went to the battalion, which I was supposed to receive.

I was sitting next to the general in the car. A calm, thoughtful leader with a special paternal attitude. We talked about various big and small things. He talked about the battles of the division and my tasks. I received a battalion, which, after a victorious battle that had just been fought, stood out for its particularly good morale.

At first, he was, along with everyone else, driven back by the Russians from their positions. The abandonment of positions by our people was like a flight. (Now that I know exactly these positions and know about the support that was there, I must call it irresponsible and incomprehensible.)

Then part of the village was retaken back, and on April 9, with the help of dive bombers and tanks, the entire village again passed into German hands. Such were the battles for Peschanoe on Babka, for the retention of which I was now responsible, at the head of a battalion weakened by battles, a rifle company, a heavy mortar group, an engineering platoon, and an anti-tank platoon. I am supported by a light field howitzer, a 240 mm mortar, a 10 cm cannon and a 15 cm cannon. This is support that is, in general, rare.

I went on foot to Peschanoe.

391

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Here I saw a battlefield that can only be found on this campaign. Hundreds of dead Russians, among them German soldiers. Most of them half-dressed, without boots, with terrible wounds and frozen limbs. Among them are Russian civilians, women. Corpses of horses and cattle with their entrails spilled out. Weapons, ammunition, tanks, guns. Hardly at least one house in the whole village was in order: most were destroyed so that only the stove remained. Here and there, women still roam among the frozen corpses. I have carefully examined all this. I must quickly overcome all sorts of feelings in myself and, as soon as possible, get used to all this, just as the soldiers who have been participating in the Eastern campaign for a long time have become accustomed to. Thinking about these things must be abandoned.

It's only good that mothers don't see their sons like that, wives don't see their husbands.

The soldier fights without complaints, but also without enthusiasm, now, after this winter.

With these thoughts, I arrived in my battalion.

The former commander of the battalion, Captain Pakke from the Panzer Division, an excellent soldier, received me excellently. The headquarters was just busy building a deep dugout. We immediately made a short walk in the coming evening twilight. He introduced me to the tactical and everyday situation of the battalion.

From time to time, an artillery shot was heard, a machine-gun burst, an illuminating rocket rose into the sky. Only a faint sketch of the war, which here took on a completely calm form.

"...You must hold these positions. Do your best to do it with the greatest success and the least loss," I said to myself.

After a thorough study of the map, I ran around the positions day and night. Spoke with the soldiers to get to know them. They were from all parts of the state: from East Prussia, from the Rhine-Pfalz, from Westphalia. There are very few old soldiers who participated in the case from the very beginning, there are many young replenishment who arrived at the front a few days ago. All of them lie in the trenches and carry out guard duty.

It is always very difficult for soldiers to settle into new positions. For weeks and months they waged a winter war: during this time, defensive positions were mainly on the outskirts

392

Konstantin Bykov

nah villages. However, these outskirts are an excellent target for artillery, which the Russians are especially good at. Therefore, away from the outskirts and away from them, burrow into the ground! Soldiers must take on this work, in order to save blood later by work.

Talks with gunners, building a battalion command post, establishing new positions for heavy weapons followed.

Then the first officer's conference, which showed me that for the most part I'm dealing here with decent, as a rule, young officers. I also transferred to them a sense of confidence in the impregnability of our positions, based on the conditions of the terrain, the presence of weapons and the morale of the unit. We look confidently at the approaching Russian offensive. However, apparently, it will keep you waiting for quite some time.

And the sun now shines almost every day, together with the wind it dries up the earth, roads and river valleys - thus approaching a favorable time for our offensive ...

The fighting spirit of Russian soldiers is now not highly valued here. The winter battles, accompanied by heavy losses for them, significantly undermined their morale. A small hint of this is given by numerous defectors. There were two of them on our site on the 18th, and four on the 19th. All Asians who were somehow trained and thrown to the front. They say the Russians stay behind and drive them forward!. At night they crossed the Babka, got stuck in the mud, walked up to their knees in the water, and the shining ones looked at us. They considered themselves only in captivity free. As paradoxical as it may sound, this seems to be true.

The Memorandum of the OO NKVD DF to the OOO NKVD of the USSR on the offensive operations of the 66th Army dated October 30, 1942 states: "Rokossovsky insisted that the detachments follow the infantry units and force the fighters to attack by force of arms ... I am citing data on the staffing of the new divisions... 62nd division division: It was on formation in PriVOs on July 28, 1942 until the first days of October... Out of a total number of personnel of 7700 people, Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Jews. Among them, 1045 people are members and candidates of the CPSU (b), 2026 people are members of the Komsomol.

252nd line division: Was on formation in the Ural Military District from August 1 until the first days of October ... Of the total number of personnel 9505 people. Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians and Jews... A similar situation with the personnel in the 226th and 212th divisions" (Stalingrad epic. P. 253).

393

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

value. The Russians are taking more and more measures to prevent defections, as well as flight from the battlefield. Therefore, the so-called "security companies"! have now been put into action, having one task: to prevent the withdrawal of their own units by force of arms. If things have already come to this, then all conclusions about the demoralization of the Red Army are legitimate. However, at the same time, this fact clearly shows the will to resist to the last and by all means.

24.17.42

Still silence. Our neighbors had good success in the offensive at Fedorovka, so that now the western bank of Babka is completely in our hands. The Russians continue to harass us at irregular intervals with their artillery and mortars without causing serious harm. Recently, we had two wounded from enemy mortar fire and a light machine gun was disabled. These are, of course, unpleasant losses, but one has to come to terms with them. I have the means in my hands to repay the Russians for this. But when I think about what is involved, I must admit that war is not the time to settle scores. Only a large fire attack could have succeeded, since the Russians were well dug in. Success would not correspond to the expenditure of forces and means, as well as the losses inevitable during this operation. Moreover, we would reveal our positions prematurely, thereby weakening the strength of our resistance. How I would like to test the strength of our rebuff as soon as possible is clear to everyone. However, all these personal moments, which are based on pride, must give way to a sense of responsibility for the lives of soldiers. Let us therefore patiently wait in the wings.

All preparations have been made. A detailed fire plan was drawn up, providing for covering the area in front of the main line of resistance with fire without any gaps.

At a two-hour officer's meeting, I informed the command

Obviously, we are talking about barrage detachments, which were created by the Directive of the Supreme Command Headquarters of September 5, 1941. This document allowed the commander of the Bryansk Front, A. Eremenko, to create barrage detachments in those divisions that had proven themselves to be unstable. The detachments were supposed to prevent the unauthorized withdrawal of units from their positions, "and in case of flight, stop them, using weapons if necessary." By order of the NPO No. 349 of October 29, 1944, the detachments were disbanded.

394

Konstantin Bykov

frame your thoughts and intentions with various possibilities of attack by the enemy.

Everyone should have an idea of what I want. Appropriate defense measures have also been taken in the event of an enemy attack on a height of 175.1. I personally went there with the commander of the reserve, fixed the place of the position, so that everything possible was done here too. I have further achieved that everyone is convinced of the impregnability of our positions. This statement, when the part believes in it, seriously increases the strength of its resistance, creates confidence in the command. Then the issues of supplying ammunition and food were settled. I also had a conversation with the commander of the engineer battalion about laying new mines.

During the night I visited my soldiers and checked the posts. Security is usually the more careless the longer the war lasts. Indifference, good nature and great sluggishness are a source of dangers that can lead to sad consequences. Therefore, just in the security service, the chief should spare no effort and personally check his people.

If I had been Russian that night, I would have sent at least a dozen of my soldiers to the other world without the slightest alarm. I tried at first to act more for good than for evil, convincing my people of the need for strict attention to this matter. After all, we are talking about our own lives and the lives of our comrades. However, words are unlikely to be helpful. We'll have to work with punishments.

Strict supervision by superiors is also an urgent need.

It also turned out that only a few have an idea about neighbors, etc. Outwardly, these are all formalities, but for a soldier they are of great psychological significance. He must be convinced that he is not fighting alone, but that there are many who are helping him, that his actions are an essential component in the common cause.

We had an unfortunate accident that cost two soldiers their lives, and a sergeant major seriously wounded. They played with an unfamiliar Russian hand grenade - a detonation followed with disastrous consequences.

When the sun disappeared behind the mountain, we buried the soldiers. But even here there was a touch of indifference to death, expressed in the simplest form of a funeral. Since the brutal winter fighting, the soldiers

395

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

accustomed to the fact that the dead are buried on the spot. (In the event that they are not left on the battlefield at all. We found here, in Peschanoe, about 50 corpses of German soldiers.)

...Last night I sent a patrol to reconnoiter the Babka valley. The river still has not entered the banks, at present it is not yet possible to accurately determine its channel. In front of our front there is a swamp 150-200 meters wide, which excludes the possibility of large movements, so that for the time being it is hardly possible to seriously reckon with the possibility of a Russian attack. I was also interested in this reconnaissance from the point of view of our own offensive. After all, someday we must also come out, perhaps our task will be to drive the enemy in our sector beyond the Donets or even destroy him before that. But perhaps still days and weeks will pass, during which our slogan: expect!

26.17.42

In our area, the only thing worthy of attention was that at night a Russian patrol with a force of 8 people reconnoitered our positions at a height of 175.1. Both soldiers of the secret were scared to death and raised the whole company. Shooting began from all the weapons available, and the patrol was driven away by this cannonade. "This is not a heroic deed," they might tell me. Yes, everyone acted wrong: the secret that ran away; the platoon leader who opened fire with all his weapons instead of trying to take the patrol prisoner; and all the people whom this weak enemy drove into the bed of Babka.

The excuse for such cases is common: the replacement is no good, cowardly, has no idea about the war. Everyone establishes it, everyone recognizes it, and so it remains. It is true that the recruits are ill-trained, frightened by terrible tales of war, and in no way prepared spiritually for combat. However, is this grounds for pessimism? Yet no! Vice versa. A rare and incomprehensible change must have taken place in German men if these soldiers did not fight in the same way as thousands and millions did before them. There is only one significant difference, that the former went through an almost two-year severe educational school, from which the reserves were spared. Unfortunately, here, in the field, they adhere to the erroneous point of view that all soldiers who have arrived in the army in the field, in their upbringing and training, are ready to unconditionally

396

Konstantin Bykov

new heroes. They consider it unnecessary to continue the process of soldier education with them. Usually excused by the fact that there is no time for this. This is a grave mistake.

I was called by a representative of 1st division department. Our position at Hill 175.1 must be moved forward. We must definitely hold the front slope. This front slope is a one and a half kilometer platform, gradually descending to Babka, then ending with a three hundred meter steep descent to the Babka stream ... The entire front slope is visible to the enemy. Again I felt painfully how easy it was to give orders on the map from behind the green table, without knowing a single step of the terrain in kind. At dusk, I myself reconnoitered the positions and ordered the two squads to occupy the forward slope at nightfall. I even determined the positions of the branches myself, so that everything was clear. A fixed watch for communication was also installed. But besides this, they also demand that the position stretch in depth! It can only be in theory. Such unrealistic demands should not be made. They bring confusion to the units and make one doubt the healthy human mind and, even worse, the tactical outlook of the command.

This morning I had a very joyful meeting with the commander of the sector next to me on the left, an old major from the World War II, who in 1918 undoubtedly did not think that under the same conditions he would once again recognize Russia. He received an order to advance his forces to the bed of Babka. Therefore, it became necessary to change the position of my left flank. He was very reasonable and objective, we soon agreed. Such negotiations, in which both sides meet each other halfway, are good for the cause. Should have practiced them more often. However, we must think about mutual assistance, mutual understanding! Too often this is precisely what is lacking: it is replaced by ungraciousness, stubbornness, observance of only one's own narrow interests, forgetting about the common interests. If it were possible to establish a junction between two parts by reconnaissance, I would attack only this place. In these places, everyone throws the responsibility on the "dear" neighbor. It will always remain this way: everyone defends basically himself.

Yesterday I again arranged a two-hour officer's conference. I spoke about my attitude to the Fuhrer's speech, about the treatment of

' Staff officer of the operational directorate of the General Staff.

397

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

addition, about soldier behavior, which still has many shortcomings. There was also already an order for the division. It spoke of facts that, in their improbability, surpassed the stage of 1918

of the year...

1.7. 1942

For several days now, the sun has disappeared, which promised us a wonderful spring. It is raining and a nasty wind is sweeping the ground. Day and night, sometimes more, sometimes less. It was precisely because of the bad weather that I decided yesterday to visit the positions. In addition, Russian artillery was especially active that night.

On the positions, I found a terrible picture that shook my soldierly feelings deeply. Day and night you walk, scout, guard, check. You establish positions to the smallest detail in order to increase your readiness for resistance as high as possible. And what did I find here? A barely occupied front line. Most of them climbed into the dugouts because of the heavy rain. No one even thought about continuing the much-needed trench work. The soldiers partially had no idea about their tasks: between the positions they occupied there were holes of 300-400 meters, without patrols, without guards. Instead of double posts, there are separate people looking for protection from the rain, not watching. Everyone else is in the commander's warm dugout. Absolutely pointless built cover from tanks, trenches without the possibility of firing and observation, guns and heavy weapons without any protection.

Pretty good for the first time!

The main mistake is the almost zero impact of junior commanders on soldiers. Barely clear tasks and orders are given, the soldier can choose what he likes. What does he like? The most convenient! Again, company commanders say that their soldiers work hard and have little rest, but in reality? They don't work during the day, because there shouldn't be any movement, besides, you need to rest for night work. However, they also sleep at night, as nature requires it.

In order to remedy this trouble once and for all, I ordered:

1. During darkness, the company works in two shifts.
2. Each soldier receives a task in writing.
3. One harness-non-commissioned officer must be awake in the company at night.

398

Konstantin Bykov

I ordered to further strengthen the positions with a barrage fence and wire obstacles 9 meters deep, to lay T-mines.

Today's defector has brought word that the Russians want to attack on May 15th. Well, until then, we'll be ready. Let them come then.

This morning I was at a class on chemical defense, which, on my orders, is now being held in the battalion. Until now, little attention has been paid to the introduction of poisonous substances into action. However, it seems to me that the Russians will resort to this last resort. Britain and the USA will push them to use this means to stop the German offensive and, secondly, to force us to use our chemical weapons and thereby expose them.

3.7. 1942

Sunday again, and again the beautiful Sunday silence. Outside, it's completely calm. Occasionally a shot sounds. The rain also stopped. Quiet west wind and pleasant warmth. It is almost impossible to imagine that this is a war. But this is also one of the sides of the war. A firefight should also have breaks, during which the parties gather their courage so that the battle flares up with renewed vigor.

Although we are here on the most advanced line, there are still a few Russian civilians in the village. We expelled the men for security reasons, with the exception of one old man who is also the headman. We left only a few women who do our laundry, sew for us, darn and do other household chores. They get a little food for this to improve their meager diet. They treat artillery fire and other manifestations of war with complete indifference. Most of their houses burned down over their heads, they somehow built stoves for themselves and lead a miserable life. As food, they are left with a barrel of pickles and sunflowers, which they tirelessly chew for days on end. They definitely have other stocks as well. How it will be next year, however, is hard to say. Fertile black earth fields lie unsown. There are no seeds, and where there were once golden fields, there will now be a black void.

399

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

5. 7.1942

...Today we had as many as ten defectors. Of these, 8 Asians and 2 Russians. The latter belonged to engineering intelligence, which had the task of finding out the conditions for crossing Babka with tanks. Assault bridges for tanks have already been built in Molodova. Consequently, we can reckon with great certainty that the Russians will attack our sector with tanks. For me, this now means: to prepare everyone for this, at least morally, to temper the will. Again and again I am forced to hear: "Yes, the infantry can come as much as you like. But tanks! Just not tanks. Then I can't guarantee anything."

This installation must be finished: by order to lay T-mines. I have 5 3.7-cm anti-tank guns (in which, however, there is not the slightest confidence now), I will distribute 400 incendiary bottles (the so-called "Molotov cocktails"), I will order the preparation of explosive shells. Each has an anti-tank slot, and 6 anti-tank rifles will be installed in the most dangerous places. I don't have more, I can't do more. Everything else necessary we must do by faith in our own strength.

6.G. 1942

Reports of preparations for a Russian offensive are intensifying. Defectors bring us a lot of significant news - often, perhaps, exaggerated, but mostly true. The construction of bridges, there are 7 of them in total, and one crossing indicates that the offensive will be carried out against our site. A whole division that will operate against us is on the march. They also talk about tanks. Today the number is 300! They want to cross the river bed of Babka with an assault bridge. The famous 50-shot rocket guns should also be used against us.

Even if all this is exaggerated, it is still clear that with our current methods of combat, the Russians have the opportunity to be especially strong in areas where they definitely want to break through and can attack with superior forces. In front of our front the last two days have been so quiet that it's eerie. Not a single shot of artillery, mortar, only very weak position movement.

Is it neticpgin before a thunderstorm?

We are working feverishly in our positions. Rain stopped. True, a sharp wind blew during the day, which, however, subsided by evening.

400

Konstantin Bykov

The sun shone all day and it was warm. Along with the strengthening of positions, I mentally prepared the junior commanders for what we should expect by means of visual exercises..."!

Kazakevich? CAFSBRF, f. 14, op. 4, d. 328, l. 367 - 371 (original).

Protocol of interrogation of a soldier of the 384th Infantry Division

REPORT OF THE NGO NKVD STF TO THE UOO NKVD OF THE USSR WITH PROTOCOLS OF INTERROGATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR R. HOLZER, K. RITTER, I. DRECHLER

August 21, 1942 Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, Commissar of State Security, 3rd rank Comrade. Abakumov

PROTOCOL OF INTERROGATION of a soldier of the 384th German Infantry Division, 534th infantry who voluntarily surrendered. p., 2 battalions, 6 companies, Ritter Kurt, year of birth. 1910, born Gittersee (near Dresden). Called into the army in January 1942 as a reservist in Rurgitedt (Chemnitz). April 12, as part of 384 infantry. div. arrived on the Eastern Front in Kramatorsk.

On August 9, he voluntarily surrendered in the Raspopinskaya area.

Question: Tell us your biography.

Answer: I was born in a working-class family. My father died long ago. I graduated from the 8th grade of the school and the vocational school in Dresden. By profession, he is a milling machine operator. I have one brother and two sisters. My brother works on the railway in Dresden. Until 1933, that is, before Hitler came to power, I was an active member of the youthful communist organization in the Gittersee. In March 1933, he was arrested by stormtroopers on suspicion of treason, but was released due to lack of evidence. From 1939 he worked at a military factory in Dresden, until the moment of conscription ...

Stalingrad epic. Page 25 - 35.

2 Kazakevich V.M. (1908 - ?) - in November 1941 - August 1942 - deputy head of the NKVD OO of the South-Western Front, August - October 1942 - DF, October 1942 - February 1943 - Central Front.

401

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Question: In what battles, where and when did you participate on the Eastern Front?

Answer: For the first time our unit took part in the battles near Kharkov, near Balakleya and on the approaches to the Don.

Question: What do you know about the plans of the German command?

Answer: Our 384th division is considered a reserve and secondary division and is no longer able to independently conduct active offensive operations. Separate units of this division were often attached to other army groupings, in particular, in the battles on the approaches to the Don, our battalion was attached to the 305th "Bodensee" division. As I have heard from the conversations of the soldiers and from the commander of our company, Lieutenant Kronenberg, our division is faced with the task of occupying

defense along the central section of the Don bend. Regarding the general plans of the German command in this sector of the front, I know from the same sources that a broad offensive against Stalingrad is planned by forcing the Don on the northern and southern flanks and capturing Stalingrad in pincers from the north - by the Guderian tank group, from the south - by the Kleist tank group, from simultaneous encirclement of the entire central grouping of Russian troops located to the west of the city.

Question: How great were the losses of your unit?

Answer: Our company suffered particularly heavy losses in the Battle of Balakleya, losing 2/3 of its personnel in the process. We received reinforcements once in the amount of ... 15 people. Now our company has only 59 people. I must say that the rest of the companies are not in the best position. The 5th and 7th companies have, for example, only 50 people each.

Question: How do you assess the prospects for war?

Answer: I believe that Germany still lost the campaign. In the final analysis, advancement in individual sections is only of a local character. Even if the Caucasus is taken, this will by no means decide the outcome of the war, since the whole question rests on the problems of ammunition and food supplies. It is impossible to ensure the production of ammunition on the spot: the industry of the occupied regions is completely destroyed. Supplying the army with food from local resources is not at all as simple as it might seem at first glance. Our division, as a secondary one, was supposed to be "self-supplied." True, this ran counter to the order forbidding military units to confiscate food from the population. But

402

Konstantin Bykov

we had no other choice. If at first we still somehow "organized" food, then recently we often had to stay hungry

20.8.42 Interrogated: O. Timashkova? DAFSB RF, f. 14, op. 4, d. 912, l. 79-84 rev. (script).

Diary of a soldier of the motorized infantry regiment of the 16th Panzer Division

REPORT OF OO NKVD STF TO THE MILITARY COUNCIL OF STF WITH TRANSLATION OF A. RIMMER'S DIARY

October 30, 1942

I am sending a copy of the abridged translation of the diary of the German soldier Alfred Rimmer, who was killed during the fighting in Stalingrad.

The diary begins during the spring battles near Kharkov and ends with an exit to the Stalingrad region on August 24 of this year.

The records reflect both the difficulties experienced by the German troops and individual moments when, due to the incorrect organization of the battle, our troops failed to achieve victory over a weak enemy.

Appendix: according to the text.

Selivanovsky?

Diary of a soldier of the motorized infantry regiment of the 16th Panzer Division Alfred Rimmer (Post No. 02051)

"April 8, 1942 - In the afternoon through Hungary, the Carpathians, they crossed the Romanian border.

April 12 — We met a Romanian soldier, a German by nationality. He is a deserter.

April 16 - We stopped at the station. Yasinovataya, not far from Stalino.

Stalingrad epic. Page 63.

2 Timashkovab. - in 1942, a translator of the counterintelligence department of the NGO STF.

3 SelivanovskyN. N. (1901 -?) - in 1942 - 1943. head of UNKVD STF, then SWF, senior major of state security.

403

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

April 23 - Busy enemy air activity every night.

April 27 - A crying woman with a child asks a lieutenant for a piece of bread. When she received the bread, she kissed the hand.

From 2.30 to 3.30 we have classes: how to behave when wounded, left behind, in captivity and when getting food.

April 29 - The first skirmish with enemies - partisans. They gave light signals during the air raid.

Italian and our posts fired 10 shots. During the night there was a heavy enemy raid.
aviation.

[May - One non-commissioned officer who arrived from the front said that the Russians had broken through the Italian front 200 km wide. At night there is a lively activity of artillery and aviation.

May 6 - Combat training from 7 to 11, robbery lesson from 11.30 to 2.30.

May 12 - Although I declared that I was ill (temperature 38.5), I am still considered capable of service.

May 17 - Terrible bombing by aircraft, wave after wave. Gunfire is heard from all sides. After dinner fight in the forest. The first prisoners In the evening, lively artillery fire from both sides.

May 18 - At 3 o'clock it began. Tanks are constantly chasing the enemy. Street fighting, in the evening fighting for every house. Many prisoners were taken.

May 19 - Again from dawn we pursue the enemy. They occupied the village and took the booty: milk, eggs, chickens, pigs. Amazing! We cleared the village and further. 100 prisoners taken. Defectors arrived with passes. The raid of new American aircraft.

May 20 - Our task is completed. Kolsho is closed, partially we have already squeezed it. 1000 taken
prisoners.

May 22 — We are moving along and across Russia, breaking all resistance. At 12 o'clock they attacked strong selected troops. The fight lasted until 10 pm - it was our most terrible fight. We have suffered heavy losses. Our own planes bombed us. All this is so terrible that I have never imagined anything like it.

May 23 - We changed positions three times, as we are too weak.

May 24 - The ring is closed. The Russians have nowhere to go. From 7 to 16 they fought off attacks. I had already lost all hope, since the Russians had a tenfold superiority.

May 25 - Russian attacks follow wave after wave from 11:00 to 19:00, But our artillery is doing its job and so are the planes. God help us! For a long time, with all our desire, we will not be able to continue like this. The Russians are 50 meters away from us. Not enough ammo. Or Russian

404

Konstantin Bykov

now break through or give up. Encirclement will soon be crowned with success, taken 1000 prisoners.

May 26 - God helped us: the Russians did not attack. From 7 to 12 bombarded 200 Russian aircraft. At one o'clock our aviation. Killed everywhere. Prey after prey. There are three armies surrounded here. We held the hill with two companies against one army... If the Russians had attacked, they would have destroyed us. All of us have already said goodbye to life - there is a roll call around: the company has completed its task and can go to the village. They ate and even went to bed, but: "Company, get ready for outpost." When our platoon passed through the forest, the Russians broke out at a distance of 100 meters with shouts of "Hurrah". Our fire repulsed the attack.

May 3 - After dinner, the whole company gathered, and the commander spoke about the tasks and successes of the encirclement: 240,000 prisoners, 500 aircraft, 2,000 guns, 1,500 tanks.

June 10 - Rise at one and 2 hours departure. The enemy is thrown back, we are pursuing him. We move quickly north. On the first day, our company had 14 victims "...

Right: Potapov? TsAFSB RF, f. 40, op. 22, d. 77, l. 50 - 54 (copy).

From the diary of a non-commissioned officer of the 297th artillery regiment of the 297th infantry division

REPORT OF OO NKVD STF VUOO NKVD USSR WITH THE TRANSLATION OF THE DIARY OF UNTER OFFICER OF THE WEhrmacht A. HEIMESSER

November 14, 1942 Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR to Commissar of State Security of the 3rd rank Comrade. Abakumov

I am sending a copy of an abridged translation from the German diary of non-commissioned officer of the 297th artillery regiment of the 297th German infantry division Alois Heymesser.

Stalingrad epic. Page 102.

? Potapov V.M. (1917 -?) - August 1942 translator of the NKVD OO UVF, from October 1942 - STF, from January 1943 - YuF, from 1942 - state security sergeant, from June 1943 - senior lieutenant of state security.

405

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The diary mainly covers the period of the August battles on the southern approaches to Stalingrad and shows the heavy losses of the Nazi troops near Stalingrad.

Application: mentioned.

Selivanovsky

Excerpts from the diary of non-commissioned officer of the 297th AP Alois Heymesser.

"May 14, 1942: At half past one, I stood at the window of my apartment and saw how a large number of residents of Chuguev went to work in Germany. They are very sad, everyone is crying.

May 25: Already at 3 o'clock in the morning there is a large movement on the side of the enemy. At 4 o'clock the defector reports that in an hour the offensive of two Russian regiments should begin, supported by 30-50 tanks. We frustrate their training with our shooting, and the Russians don't succeed" (...

Right: Potapov CA FSB RF, f. 40, op. 22, d. 11, l. 6 - 65 (copy).

Soldiers of the 57th Army on the eve of the Kharkov operation

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION "ON THE POLITICAL AND MORAL STATE OF THE FIGHTERS OF THE 57TH ARMY OF THE SF BY THE MATERIALS OF MILITARY CENSORSHIP"

[No later than 30] April 1942. To the head of the department of special departments of the NKVD of the USSR, the commissar of state security of the 3rd rank comrade. Abakumov

During the reporting period, the military censorship department of the UNKVD of the 57th Army carried out the following work:

1. Passed documents 130084
2. Processed outgoing from DKA 123875
3. Passed in the languages of the peoples of the USSR raw 6209
4. Translated from the Tatar language 30
5. Memorandums sent to the NGO NKVD for prompt use 55

Stalingrad epic. Page 130.

406

Konstantin Bykov

6. Documents sent to the territorial bodies of the NKVD for taking action 7
7. Confiscated 246

OF THEM:

- a) German postcards with Hitler's appeal 86
- 6) unofficial reports of the death of military personnel 98
- c) German view photographs with text in German 26
- d) German topographic maps on which the text of the letter is written, 12
- e) letters with obscene expressions 2
- e) other letters 22

Note: Others include the following letters:

- a) letters written on the portraits of the leaders of the party and government
- 6) with erased recipient addresses
- c) there is no text of the letter written by the addressee himself
- d) letters written by fighters on German paper depicting German aviation.

Confiscated documents in the amount of 246 pcs. destroyed by burning.

Of all the letters examined by military censorship, 9286 documents of a positive nature were found.

Along with this, negative statements were also found by servicemen in letters to relatives and friends, as well as information that is not subject to disclosure - 7023. In these letters, soldiers write about the location of the unit, indicating in detail the village, district, region, complaints about poor nutrition (331 cases), lice (12 cases), loss information, etc.

Here are a few excerpts from letters from soldiers and commanders showing healthy, patriotic sentiments, expressing their readiness to continue the defeat of the fascist invaders.

Fighter Zvyagin N.M. (341 sd) writes to his parents in the city of Astrakhan: "Help us - the front-line soldiers in your rear, and we will beat their reptiles, the robbers of the damned to the last drop of blood. Dad, I joined the Komsomol and I think if you die, then be a party person.

Korovin A.R. writes to his brother: "Your reward imposes even more on our family to beat mercilessly two-legged Nazi beasts, not sparing their strength, nor life itself.

407

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

I know that our father will not be ashamed of his sons, in this battle we will show ourselves as real sons of our free happy homeland. So, Fedya, let's beat this brutal gang even harder for the torments of our gray-haired old men, wives, children, for our ruined, destroyed houses, cities in which we grew up, matured, built them ourselves, in them we have come to know real life, the great ideas of Lenin and Stalin, and in the struggle for these ideas we will be worthy sons of our party, of the great people."

Senior Lieutenant Nikolai Dmitriev (341st Rifle Division, min. battalion) writes to his brother: "You are Art. lieutenant, and I mortar commander, you are in Voronezh, and I am in my native Ukraine, you are on an armored train, and in the air - in the steppe. Let's give the Motherland, in addition to the oath, our brotherly oath to beat the enemy, who has more opportunities.

Kolya, you and I are two brothers, both in different branches of the military, the task is the same - together with all the Russian people and the peoples who recognize our Soviet Union, to defeat our common enemy.

Gavrelyuk Vasily (341 sd) writes to his wife: "The enemy is taking revenge on us for yesterday, yesterday our heroes 12 falcons smashed him so that he cannot reach his memory, he feels his end and his death. Spring will come, in a few days a battle will begin, which fascism does not know.

The lousy Fritz feel the power and strength of our weapons. This is not France or Poland for him. Today is not the war that was 6 months ago, today we are fighting for every inch of the Russian land, as the great Stalin teaches us."

Okhtov M. (341 sd) writes: "Kazya, there is no more serious matter than to defeat the Nazi army as soon as possible and liberate our native land as soon as possible. Help the front from the rear as much as possible, mobilize all forces for this, and the Red Army will crush Hitlerism to the end, and then we will be freed. from the German invasion.

Brother, rely on me as on your own brother, how I fight with dignity and will fight to the last breath against Hitler's Grabarmy."

Fighter Arnazarov Sh. writes to his parents in the Taj. SSR: "Don't think that you are only worried about us, don't worry about me, the whole country is worried about us, our dear

favorite leader

Comrade Stalin. Dear brothers and sisters, do not take anything into account, help

country in defense work, I'm with the good guys, and I

408

Konstantin Bykov

They don't offend me in any way, a very good commander, I feel pretty good."

The Kubikov fighter (106th rifle division) writes to his girlfriend: "Klava, I mercilessly smash the German occupiers from my cannon, and more than a dozen enslavers fell from my well-aimed fire; we are not afraid of their tanks, not a single fascist tank will leave my sector of fire, more than a dozen fascists lay down from my accurate aiming.

Taking into account my military exploits, the command of the division presented me for a government award - the "Order of the Red Banner", and also accepted me as a candidate of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks.

And the confidence that the Party and the entire Soviet people have given me to defend the Soviet land and our homeland, we will honor it."

Fighter Savyuk V.T. (130th brigade, p/o box... PID battery) writes to his comrade Gorshkov (IPS 183, special department):

"For the death of my beloved brother Vasily, I will fight with even greater hatred for bloody fascism, and for the death of my brother I will destroy more than a dozen Fritz. As an anti-tanker, I assure you that not a single fascist tank will escape my gun.

I will, with my calculation, beat them wherever they appear. Recently, I beat the fascist evil spirits, beat hard and saw for myself how Fritz and Hans flew up from my volleys.

The death of my brother forces me to beat the fascist reptile with redoubled and tripled hatred."

The rest of the letters are of a normal nature. During the same time, 18 cases with negative statements were found out of all the correspondence subjected to reading.

Here are some of the most characteristic excerpts from letters of a negative nature.

Fighter Zhmyrkin T.M. (74 cd) writes to his wife: "I am writing the last letter, I am going into battle to the front line of fire, so that one thought is either wounded or killed; if they hurt, then it's a great happiness, so you won't see me again. "

Fighter Aganyantsev Sergey (70kd) writes to his family: "I am in the convoy, but life is not enviable for everyone, death for everyone and I don't think that I will have to see you, because the situation is very bad."

Fighter Maslihin P.V. (106 sd) writes to his family: "Do not wait for me because I go forward, and death is behind me, war and revenge are not the same as

409

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

were in Rostov. Enemy tanks are visible from the window, the shooting is tired and prevents you from continuing to live. I have no idea about my LIFE."

Fighter Remezov F.A. writes to his wife: "That's when the flour came, my legs hurt very much, I probably won't have to see you. I am very bored, there are no friends, no one to talk to. How difficult and

it's scary to part with the white light. Do not grieve, pray to God, maybe God will let you see. There were 6 wings, I would have flown to you for at least one day. Goodbye".

The fighter Krasnov (349 joint ventures) writes to his family: "I don't think I'll come home, I have the idea that I will have to die in the Ukrainian regions. I'm tired of the Ukrainian lands, you just expect death, when ours go on the offensive, we follow on horseback, pick up the wounded and take them to infirmary."

The case of the use of tear gas by the enemy also found a response in a number of letters from the fighters. In this regard, it deserves to be noted that the fighters in their letters, informing their relatives about this fact, do not express confusion or fear, on the contrary, having met this fact in cold blood and with calmness, the fighters express confidence and steadfastness in the fight against the enemy.

Let us cite a number of characteristic statements in the letters of the fighters on this subject.

Fighter F.I.M. writes: "Their retreat is littered with the corpses of fascists; in general, we fight every day. Before his death, he began to throw tear gases, 5 Red Army soldiers went blind, but this will not stop our offensive, all the soldiers have gas masks.

Fighter Paterikin A.P. (74 cd) writes to his family: "The enemy began to use gases in some places, but we are not very afraid of this, because our army is fully equipped with gas masks, with the exception of the civilian population."

Fighter Volobuev Vladimir (6th brigade) writes: "Borya. Study all types of weapons, if you have to participate in a patriotic war - all this will come in handy, and especially pay great attention to the PVCO. Hitler's brown plague is preparing to apply chemistry. Our unit captured in the form of trophies - cartridges, bullets, which are stuffed with gases.

In some subdivisions and parts of the army, lice continue to occur among the fighters. During the reporting decade, 12 cases were found with complaints of fighters about lice.

410

Konstantin Bykov

Here are some examples of these complaints.

Fighter Bondarenko N.V. (64 cd) writes: "Linen is no worse than footcloths, there is nowhere to change it, and there is no point. You sleep where you have to and always in your overcoat - it's still cold. If the linen is clean, more lice appear, so you have to hunt for them."

Fighter Kozlovstev K.N. (1 kk) writes to his wife: "I and in general all the fighters have a lot of parasites, five together and more, even in outerwear."

Fighter Korotkov Mikhail (131 TBbr) writes to his relative: "The only thing I can't put up with is that there are a lot of lice.

As soon as I left the city of Stalingrad, I have not been in the bathhouse since then, for the 4th month already.

Cases of fighters expressing dissatisfaction in letters to relatives about poor nutrition, its insufficiency, scarcity and monotony have become more frequent. So, for 10 days of April, 331 cases of complaints about nutrition were detected.

Here are some of the most characteristic excerpts from the letters of soldiers dissatisfied with food.

The fighter Umar Dizirov writes in a letter to his relatives: "We climb in the water above the knee, we are hungry, the ration is very small, we never get enough, and you can't buy anything for money, so

that I am very hungry. You won't get anything else but your Red Army ration."

Fighter Tolikov A.P. (PTR battalion) writes to his mother: "It's a little difficult about food. 500 gr. bread for a day, 2 times welding, and this welding - millet and peas, nothing more.

Disclosure of information constituting a military secret continues to occupy a large place in the correspondence of the fighters of active units with relatives and friends.

Very often, in their letters to relatives, fighters report about those killed and taken prisoner (1281 cases), about the place where he and his unit are located, about losses in the unit, captures, etc. At the same time, all kinds of detailed data are described, which are a decoding of the state and deployment of units of the army in the field. Suffice it to say that from month to month the number of delayed letters of this nature does not decrease, on the contrary, it tends to

even more growth. So, for example, for the reporting first 10 days of April,

411

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

702 letters disclosing information constituting a military secret.

Letters containing information of the nature cited by the vynge, without prejudice to the text, were obscured and sent to the addressees or, in exceptional cases, were confiscated and destroyed.

In order to take measures regarding the conduct of appropriate political and explanatory work among the fighters on the issues of disclosing military secrets, sending German leaflets, papers, etc. to relatives, we again raised the issue before the Military Council of the Army.'

Shevchenko? CA FSB RF, f. 14, op. 5, d. 96, l. 83 - 91 (original).

The mood of the soldiers of the SWF after the defeat near Kharkov

MESSAGE OF THE OO NKVD SWF TO THE UOO NKVD OF THE USSR IN THE STATEMENTS OF
INDIVIDUAL MILITARY PERSONNEL

July 5, 1942 People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, General Commissar of States, Security
Comrade. L.P. Beria?

Recently, in connection with the withdrawal of units and formations of the Southwestern Front to new frontiers, a number of anti-Soviet, defeatist and treacherous statements have been noted on the part of some servicemen. For example: Deputy commander of the 76th SD, Lieutenant Colonel Vasiliev, discussing the situation at the front, among senior commanders said: "... I now have the impression that

Stalingrad epic. Page 141.

Shevchenko - in April - December 1942, head of the NKVD OO of the 57th Army, captain of state security.

3 Be ria L.P. (1899 - 1953) - in 1938 - 1945. People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, simultaneously in 1941 - 1946. Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, in 1941 - 1945. GKO member. since 1941 — general commissar of state security.

412

Konstantin Bykov

September 1941 repeats. Then we also pulled together, concentrated, and then abandoned everything, remaining surrounded. This music can be repeated even now. And all this is done because we do not do as we were taught, i.e. to defend himself by attacking, so does the German, and that is why he is successful. He does not sit still, he constantly feels, makes sorties, the ama, as soon as they dug in, we will lie down. This leads to the loss of materiel, the surrender of territory. You sit and do not know what is happening on the right, what is happening on the left, and look what they tell you - we are surrounded.

The commander of the 207th joint venture of the same division, Barseghyan, who was present at this discussion, said: "... Why are you talking like little children. The allies will help in two cases: when the German gets too close to Baku, or when we have a major success and we push the enemy back to the old borders. It's an old British tactic...

... The commander of the unit of the 80th artillery regiment of the 76th SD, Lieutenant Stabyuk, telling the soldiers the message of the Sovinformburo about the battles in the Kharkov direction, said: "... In two weeks of fighting with the Germans, we lost 70 thousand people missing and a lot of materiel real part. With such losses, we could not take the mountains. Kharkov. If we continue to fight like this in the future, we can ruin all the people, but not have success. Although we are told that the German army is badly battered, but it is a strong army ... "

The division command has been informed.

The head of the workshop of the 227th SD, Rybalchenko, among a number of servicemen, said: "... You see, what a war. Remember me that we will die, and the German will win. We will have to retreat to the Volga, and there the end ... "

The foreman of the 93rd joint venture of the same division, Privarov, in a conversation with junior commanders, said: "We were persuaded, they wrote a lot that the war would end in six months, but in fact the end of the war was not yet in sight. The situation at the front is the same as it was at first. People are thrown to the slaughter, they are turned into cannon fodder, but there are no results ... "

After these statements, Privarov took a rifle and said: "... Are there many win..."

Privarov's statements are documented to bring him to justice.

The commander of the department of the 1059th joint venture, Balakirev, being in class, in the presence of junior commanders, said: "... They are talking about the offensive and destruction of the Germans, but this is all talk, but on actually since

413

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

how we will attack, because rifles are tantamount to sticks, and you can't win with such weapons. And therefore it must be assumed that we cannot defeat the German army ... "

It was proposed to arrest the special division of Balakirev.

Junior sergeant of the PTR company of the 293rd SD Bagatikov Ivan Matveevich, born in 1912. born, a native of the Kursk region, in a conversation with fighters about the actions of our units in the Lozovoy area, said: "... 70 thousand fighters and commanders, which are discussed in the newspaper, did not go missing, but went over to the enemy. I will also take a machine gun, shoot the commanders and go over to the Germans with a machine gun ... "

Bagatikov has been arrested and an investigation is underway.

The Red Army soldier of the 13th Guards Rifle Division Teterev, expressing disbelief in the victory of the Red Army, said to the soldiers: "...Now we will not stop until the very Urals. We can say with full confidence that this month the German will drive us all the way to the Volga ... "

Pilipchuk, a Red Army soldier of the 1059th joint venture, in the presence of a number of Red Army soldiers, stated: "... It is clear during the course of the war that the Red Army cannot defeat the German army and the German from Ukraine will not leave. Happy is the one who remained in the rear of the Germans, lives happily ever after and works at home ... "

It was proposed to the Special Division to arrest Pilipchuk.

Soprykin, a Red Army soldier of the 28th SME of the 8th MSD, told the soldiers: "... HERE, in the Kharkov direction, 75 thousand of our brother lay down, but did nothing. And I assure you, if there is no victory for us until autumn, then all the Red Army soldiers will go over to the side of the Germans and will not fight ... "

The facts are documented, after which Soprykin will be arrested.

A Red Army soldier of the 16th SME of the same Nizovtsev division, in relation to the fighting in the izum-Barvenkovsky direction, said: "... Since stubborn battles are going on, the German will win and take the Donbass. You will see how a German fights, what equipment he has. I personally saw how ours retreated in the Smolensk direction ... "

After the conversation held by the political commissar about the traitor to the motherland, he also declared:

"...Just think, one person crossed over, so they raised such a scandal. I saw how entire regiments surrendered along with equipment ... "

Nizovtsev was arrested by a special division, an investigation is underway.

The Red Army soldier of the 349th SD Makogonov told the Red Army men of his unit: "... If everyone turned their weapons against the commissars and commanders, then in ten minutes the war would be end and

414

Konstantin Bykov

individual farming would be restored again, and there would be plenty of food ... "

Makogonov is arrested and put on trial by a military tribunal.

Prokopenko, the gun commander of the 436th OZAD, read a fascist leaflet among the Red Army gunners, and then declared: "... The Germans are doing it right to drop the leaflets. What they write in their leaflets is all right, but the Germans are also right when they write that our government has fled.

The individual distribution of land to the peasants is correct because Germany does not need all the land. My mother lives well in the occupied land and expects me...

The newspapers write and the commissars say that it is as if there is no food in Germany, but it turns out the other way around.

German soldiers eat canned food, chocolate, marmalade and other sweets. This can be judged by the warehouses they left behind. With us, the situation is completely worse, they feed us oatmeal with water, and even that is not enough. Newspaper material does not contain justice ... "

It was proposed to arrest Prokopenko.

The Military Council and the head of the political department of the front have been informed about the above!

Selivanovsky

CA FSB RF, f. 14, op. 4, d. 912, l. 1 - 3 (original).

Evaluation of the command of the military personnel of the 21st Army

REPORT OF THE NGO NKVD STF TO THE UOO NKVD USSR "ON ANTI-SOVIET AND DEFEATIST STATEMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL MILITARY PERSONNEL"

21st ARMY" b August 1942. Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR

Commissar of State Security of the 3rd rank comrade. Abakumov

For the period from 15 to 30 July. A number of anti-Soviet and defeatist statements were noted on the part of individual soldiers and commanders of units of the 21st Army.

Stalingrad epic. Page 148.

415

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

For example:

...Among the personnel of the units of the 2nd 1st Army, several facts of statements were noted with an assessment of the activities of the army command and the front of the following content.

Lieutenant of the 278th SD Legkodymov, on July 27, 1942, among the Red Army soldiers said:

"... When Budyonny was in command of the Southwestern Front, we fought near Odessa, the front was along the Dniester and the Bug, when Timoshenko began to command, they began to retreat and retreat ...

Tov. Voroshilov saved and defended Leningrad, which was in the most difficult situation. All the people are talking about Voroshilov, and if he had been instructed to command the Southern Front, he would have defeated the enemy's southern grouping and would have thrown the enemy back ...".

The commander of the 855th Rifle Division, the 278th Rifle Division, Major Fedorov, spoke among the command staff of the regiment that Timoshenko was a bad warrior and was ruining the army.

Chief of Staff of Artillery of the 76th SD, Captain Svechkor, in a conversation with staff members, 26.7.42 stated:

"...We have been betrayed. Five armies threw the Germans to the front. Someone is currying favor with Hitler. The front is open and the situation is hopeless, but we have been marinated here since July 6 and have not been identified in any way. They scattered the division and deliberately made it unfit for combat, while it was possible to complete it and throw it into battle ... "

Beginning medical service of the same division, a military doctor of the 2nd rank Nikulin expresses distrust of the command of the army and the front, stating:

"... They were confused, lost control, no one knew about the crossings and no one thought about them. They don't know how to command, they give several orders, and then they are canceled..."

A member of the Military Council comrade was informed about the above. Khrushchev, head of the political department of the front comrade. Galadzhev (.

Kosolapov? CA FSBRF, f. 14, op. 4, d. 912, l. 153 - 154 (original).

Stalingrad epic. Page 167.

? Kosolapov V.M. (1911 -?) - January - August 1942, Deputy Head of the OO NKVD of the South-Western Front, August - October 1942. - OO NKVD STF, since October 1942 - OO NKVD DF, smarta 1941 - senior major of state security.

416

Konstantin Bykov

From the report of the High Command of the South-Western direction No. 00137 / OP to the headquarters of the Supreme High Command on the situation that had developed by mid-March 1942 on the fronts of the South-Western direction, and considerations on the prospects for combat operations of the troops of the direction in the spring-summer period of 1942 G.

March 22, 1942

The tasks set for the winter period of 1942 by the troops of the South-Western direction are still not fully implemented.

As a result of a number of operations undertaken with strikes on the most important and vital for the enemy axes, the fronts of the South-Western direction took the initiative of action into their own hands, inflicted significant losses on the enemy and liberated a significant territory from the Nazi occupiers. |

Particularly effective were operations at the junction of the Southwestern and Southern fronts, where our troops managed to break through the enemy's fortified zone, inflict significant losses on him and, having captured the areas of Alekseevka, Lozovaya, Barvenkovo, deprive the enemy of the most important railway line Kharkov-Donbass and threaten deep rear of his main group operating in the Donbass and the Taganrog region.

At the same time, our troops occupied a very advantageous position for the development of the offensive on Kharkov. Only the lack of manpower and resources prevented the full use of the success achieved both for the final defeat of the main enemy grouping in the south and for the capture of Kharkov.

1. EVALUATION OF THE ADVERSE AND HIS PROBABLE INTENTIONS

As a result of the offensive operations carried out and are being carried out now, we managed to disrupt the normal operational formation of the enemy troops, to force him not only to use up all operational reserves, but also to tear apart his divisions of the first line of defense, up to individual battalions, in order to localize our successes.

The enemy has been brought by the active actions of our troops to such a state that without an influx of large strategic reserves

14 The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 417

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

and significant replenishment of people and materiel is unable to undertake an operation with a decisive goal.

According to agents and testimonies of prisoners, the enemy is concentrating large reserves with a significant number of tanks east of Gomel and in the areas of Kremenchug, Kirovograd, Dnepropetrovsk, apparently with the aim of moving to decisive action in the spring. It is difficult now to predict the extent of this offensive. One can only speculate about the probable lines of action and the operational-strategic aspirations of the enemy.

We believe that the enemy, despite the major failure of the autumn offensive against Moscow, will again strive in the spring to capture our capital. To this end, his main grouping is stubbornly striving to maintain its position in the Moscow direction, and its reserves are concentrated against the left wing of the Western Front (east of Gomel and in the area

Bryansk). It is most likely that, along with frontal attacks against the Western Front, the enemy will launch an offensive with large forces of motorized mechanized units from the Bryansk and Orel regions, bypassing Moscow from the south and southeast, with the aim of reaching the Volga River in the Gorky region and isolating Moscow from the most important industrial and economic centers of the Volga and Ural regions.

In the south, one should expect the offensive of large enemy forces between the river. Seversky Donets and the Taganrog Bay with the aim of capturing the lower reaches of the Don and the subsequent rush to the Caucasus to oil sources. This strike will probably be accompanied by an offensive by an auxiliary group of troops on Stalingrad and landing operations from the Crimea to the Caucasian coast of the Black Sea.

To ensure the operations of the main strike groupings against Moscow and the Caucasus, the enemy will undoubtedly try to deliver an auxiliary strike from the Kursk region to Voronezh. With the release of this group of enemy troops in the region of Voronezh, Liski, Valuyki, we may lose the most important railway lines | highways linking Moscow with the Donbass and the Caucasus.

Hydrometeorological conditions make it possible to launch extensive military operations in the south in mid-April and in the north in the first half of May.

But, taking into account the advantages of a simultaneous transition to the offensive of large forces on all fronts, it can be assumed that the enemy will launch aggressive offensive operations in the middle of May. G.

To date, the enemy forces in front of the troops of the South-Western direction are presented in the following form:

418

Konstantin Bykov

Table |

Total tanks active

voicing

Motorized DIVISIONS

Characterizing the combat composition of the enemy on the basis of the testimony of prisoners of war and undercover data, one can come to the conclusion that his infantry suffered losses, received few reinforcements, due to which it has a large shortage. 48 infantry divisions, marked in front of the front of the South-Western direction, in their composition have 14 infantry divisions from 2 to 4 thousand people, i.e. 30 percent; 15 infantry divisions from 4 to 6 thousand [cells | people, i.e. 40 percent; 13 infantry divisions from 6,000 to 8,000 men[ovek], i.e. 50 percent ; 6 infantry divisions from 8 thousand [cells] people [ovek] and more, i.e. 70 - 80 percent. The shortage of personnel of these divisions is approximately 430,000 people.

Our intelligence did not note the arrival of such a large number of reinforcements, but the beginning of the influx was established against the troops of the Bryansk and Southern Fronts...

The enemy tank divisions take part in the battles with us only with the forces of motorized units and a limited number of remaining serviceable and repaired tanks. The main part of the tank crews is in the rear, waiting to receive combat vehicles. According to the report of agents in Poltava, up to 3500 tankers are concentrated, i.e. crews for 1000-1200 vehicles.

If we assume that all the tank and motorized divisions currently located against the South-Western direction are again replenished to the level of the beginning of the war, then we will have against the troops of the South-Western direction:

419

0\$0From 000\$ | n 9 IT [051 05 052 05C | PI 051 05% 05 009 005 from | — inyzhs 056 1 055 05 00° PtbilE ichniep
00\$ -ÿ&-OTOL 009 oh pis PEZTI [1 iihenvach a one HVIZIA IINENIP20E` aonet IINENIPE | 01298 - IP is choking | monpo
chchoh 0129 -IP YA CHOUNEG -09 MONTO YA okeeeeshoo | - negonei. oneii eepoo | chochnegonoi | iolya gnvi4eya |
ichacheng tneide

sepino |,

420

Konstantin Bykov

, Given the decline in the offensive spirit of the infantry, it must be expected that in order to support its actions in
In combat, the enemy will have up to 30 separate tank battalions, 30 tanks each, in the 64 infantry divisions expected
by the spring, which will amount to a total of 900 tanks. In addition, the possibility of up to three new tank divisions with
a total of 750-1500 tanks appearing against the troops of the South-Western direction is not ruled out.

As a result, we can assume that in total against the troops of the South-Western direction, by the beginning of the spring-
summer campaign, the enemy can have 7,400 tanks in the first version and 3,700 tanks in the second. However, taking
into account the significant losses of the enemy throughout the entire period of the war with us, it is more likely that he will be
able to have the number of tanks against the South-Western direction according to the second option, i.e. up to 3700 units.

Considering the question of increasing the number of infantry divisions against the troops of the Southwestern direction,
it must be assumed that the enemy from the troops stationed in Germany and the occupied countries can send up to 45
infantry divisions against the USSR, of which at least one third, i.e. 15 divisions, he will throw against the troops of the
South-Western direction.

It is also necessary to take into account the fact that the enemy will apparently receive up to 20 Romanian, Slovak and
Hungarian infantry divisions and, under favorable conditions for him, can replace his 7 Romanian-Hungarian infantry
divisions in the Crimea, sending them also to the fronts of the southwestern direction.

As a result, the enemy will increase his composition in front of the South-Western direction by 22 German infantry divisions and
by 13 Rumanian-Hungarian infantry divisions.

Considering its goals, one can assume that these reserve divisions against the troops of the South-Western direction
can be used: in the Bryansk Front - four infantry divisions; in the zone of the Southwestern Front - three German infantry
divisions and eight Romanian-Hungarian infantry divisions; in the zone of the Southern Front - fifteen German infantry
divisions and five Romanian-Hungarian infantry divisions.

The introduction of this number of divisions will not give a significant increase in operational density along the entire
length of the front, and one cannot even expect a uniform saturation of the front line from the enemy.

One must be prepared [and] for the fact that the enemy will try again to go over to operations in decisive axes with
massed mobile groupings and will fully use his reserve divisions in these axes.

421

einegaeapen eonpeie<-010]

—

IIICHI 5 chlnoa4f IIEICHI -010/(-ISIP nloho]

i G.

iipAdo Zounet, 0199& 01995

-pee i) IIEICHIG

echaohne chnodo0o 1tnoaf 1.

sepitsoe |,

Konstantin Bykov

Summing up, it must be assumed that by the beginning of offensive operations the enemy will have [forces and means, as indicated in Table. 3]:

In order to achieve decisive successes or, in the event of a lack of forces, to achieve them, the enemy will not stop at the use of chemical warfare, signs of which are the data on the delivery and creation of stockpiles of chemical weapons in the Stalino region, the systematic conduct of chemical training of their troops and the staffing of units with personnel of the chemical service. .

P. THE IMMEDIATE STRATEGIC GOAL OF ACTIONS OF THE TROOPS OF THE SOUTH-WESTERN DIRECTION

By all indications, spring should be marked by the resumption of broad offensive operations by the enemy.

Regardless of this, the troops of the South-Western direction during the spring-summer campaign should strive to achieve the main strategic goal - to defeat the opposing enemy forces and reach the middle Dnieper (Gomel, Kiev, Cherkassy) and further to the Cherkasy front, Pervomaisk, Nikolaev .

Depending on the specific situation, and above all on the real alignment of forces that will take shape by the start of the main operations, this main strategic goal will be pursued on each front in the Southwestern direction in different ways.

In order to create favorable conditions for the entry of troops of the South-Western Direction into the spring-summer campaign, it is necessary to make the most efficient use of the time remaining until the spring thaw in order to:

- a) successfully complete a number of private operations and put their troops in a more advantageous operational position by the beginning of the spring campaign,
- 6) replenish the troops with personnel and materiel, bring up the necessary reserves and, having adopted the appropriate operational formation, be ready to enter in an organized way into the first operations of the spring campaign,
- c) timely identify areas of concentration of large enemy operational groupings intended for crossing

423

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Yes, on the offensive, and by all available measures (conducting private operations, the influence of own aviation, the actions of partisan detachments) to prevent, and where possible, to disrupt the preparation and transition of the enemy to the offensive. Y

SH. COMBAT COMPOSITION OF THE SOUTH-WESTERN

The total length of the front of troops in the South-Western direction is 1073 km.

The troops of the direction include: rifle divisions - 70, rifle brigades - 10, cavalry divisions - 18, motorized rifle brigades - 2, tank brigades - 22, separate tank battalions - 2, artillery [Illerian | regiments of the RGK - 32, artillery [Illerian | anti-tank regiments - 11, guards mortar regiments - 3, guards mortar divisions - 3, ski battalions - 26. In total: rifle divisions - 741, field guns - 2451, tanks - 1003. - monte - 195, in service - 481 ...

The general condition of the troops of the South-Western direction is characterized by the following main data:

a) the shortage of rifle formations alone reaches 370,888 people, which is about 46 percent. staffing,

6) out of 70 rifle divisions, only 3 divisions have up to 75 percent. regular staff, and the rest - 50 percent. and less. 30 divisions have less than 5500 people each, and only 1000-1200 active rifles,

c) the average provision of troops with weapons is as a percentage: rifles - 51.2, heavy machine guns - 22.5, light machine guns and PPD - 24.3, mortars - 46.4, field artillery guns - 67.0, anti-tank guns - 26.0, anti-tank rifles - 46.0, tanks - 63.3, motor vehicles - 52.5, tractors - 61.8.

The average monthly loss of personnel is 110-130 thousand people. The replenishment being dressed up barely makes up for this loss, and the troops continue to be understaffed.

In order to get rid of this extremely abnormal phenomenon, it would be necessary to cover the existing debt before the start of the spring-summer campaign.

`! Including ten sbr and two msbr taken for 4 divisions.

424

Konstantin Bykov

set - 427,000 people [ovek] and in the future to provide norms

a small monthly influx of replenishment of 130-150 thousand people.

Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Troops

new direction Marshal of the Soviet Union

TYMOSHENKO

Member of the Military Council of the Southwestern

Khrushchev's reign

Head of the Operational Group of the South-Western

Board Lieutenant General BAGHRAMYAN

TsAMO, F. 251, op. 646, d. 145, ll. 34 - 60 (copy). Published according to VIZh No. 12 - 1989.

The plan of the operation of the troops of the South-Western direction to capture the Kharkov region and further offensive in the directions of Dnepropetrovsk, Sinelnikovo

"I approve" Commander-in-Chief of the YuZN Troops Marshal of the Soviet Union S. TIMOSHENKO

]April 1942

1. In accordance with the instructions of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, in order to pre-empt the enemy in the deployment of offensive operations and maintain the initiative in the hands of our troops, the following main goal is set before the South-Western direction for the period April-May: to capture the Kharkov region, regroup the troops and then blow in the directions of Dnepropetrovsk, Art. Sinelnikovo to deprive the enemy of the most important crossings on the Dnieper.

The private goals for the fronts are: for the South-Western Front - the defeat of the Kharkov grouping of the enemy and access to the Nikitovka, Karlovka, Buzovka line to ensure the subsequent actions of the troops of the Southern Front in the direction of Dnepropetrovsk; for the Southern Front - a solid defense of the occupied ru

425

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

fleeing and covering the Rostov, Voroshilovgrad directions and the Barvenkovo, Slavyansk, Izyum regions.

2. To achieve the goals set, the main plan in the actions of the Southwestern Front is: enveloping strike 6 Asyugai 28 A from the north, surround and destroy the Kharkov enemy grouping, reach the indicated line and create an advantageous starting position for regrouping for the subsequent strike on Dnepropetrovsk and Art. Sinelnikovo.

The main idea of the actions of the Southern Front is to create a deep echeloned defense in the most important areas and conduct active defense to pin down the forces of the opposing enemy.

In order to carry out the planned plan of action of the fronts, plan:

Getap (preparatory).

During the first stage, the Southwestern Front regroups its forces, deploys formations of the 28th Army and accumulates material and technical means for the forthcoming operation. The Southern Front, having allocated part of its formations to the South-Western Front, continues to strengthen the occupied defense lines. |

Air Force tasks: destruction of enemy aircraft at airfields and in the air; destruction of industrial facilities in Taganrog and Mariupol; destruction of the material part of military equipment in the areas of concentration; destruction of nodes and lines of communication.

P stage (6 - 7 days. Breakthrough of the enemy's defense).

The southwestern front breaks through the enemy's defenses and on the 6th-7th day of the offensive comes to the frontier with rifle formations: on the right flank - Kreida, Tolokonnoye, Liptsy, Nepokryataya; on the left flank - Dudkovka, Garanovka, Vlasovka, Ereemevka, Kokhanovka, Pokrovskoye. Moveable joints by the end of the second stage exit:

3 tv. kk - district of Cossack Lopan, Zolochiv, Slatino;

2 microns - Cheremushnaya, Znamenka, Rakitnoye;

3Zmk - Snowy, Christmas, Minkovka;

2 kk - Stanichny, Kirillovka, Karavanskoye;

b kk - Krasnograd district.

Southern front - (the task is missing. - Ed.).

Air Force tasks. Assisting the advancing troops in suppression

426

Konstantin Bykov

ground defense of the enemy, covering troops from air strikes and operations against reserves approaching the front.

The depth of the stage of the operation is 30-35 km. The average rate of advance is 5–6 km by day. Stage duration: 6 - 7 days.

III stage (7 - 8 days). Completion of the encirclement and defeat of the Kharkov grouping of the enemy.

The southwestern front completes the encirclement of the enemy and advanced units reach the line: Sazhnoye, Tomarovka, Bogodukhov, Kovyagi, Chutovo, Popovka, Skalonovka and southeast along the sowing bank of the river Orel.

Southern front - (the task is missing. - Ed.).

Air Force tasks. Action on enemy reserves in order to prevent the influx of new enemy forces to the Kharkov area. Covering own troops from enemy air strikes. Suppression of enemy resistance in the Kharkov area.

The depth of the stage of the operation is 40 - 45 km. The average rate of progress is 7–8 km per day. The duration of the operation stage is 7-8 days.

3. To achieve the goal of the operation, establish the following grouping of forces and tasks of the troops.

Southwestern Front:

21A (consisting of 8 motor rifle divisions, 293, 297, 226 and 76 rifle divisions, 21 motorized rifle brigade, 10 brigade, 8 detachments; 338 and 105 paws of the RGK, 110 gap RGK and 156 arm. ap of the 2nd type) is deployed at the front: Marino, Shakhovo, Shebekino (105 km) with the following grouping of forces: the Marino, Shakhovo, Myasoedovo front (80 km) is defended by the 8th Infantry Division of the 293rd Rifle Division with two legs of the RGK; 297, 226 and 76 rifle divisions with 10 tank brigade, one gap RGK and 156 arm. ap of the 2nd type is deployed on the Myasoedovo, Shebekino front (23 km) for an offensive in order to secure the right flank of 28 A. Reserve 21 A - 21 MSBR from 8 brigade in the area of Koshcheevo, Korocha, Kazanka.

The tasks of the army: advancing on the left flank, by the end of the sixth day, reach the line: Kreida, Nelidovka, Tolokonnoye, cut the Belgorod-Kharkov highway with advanced units and secure the right flank of 28 A. By the end of the fourteenth day of the offensive, capture the Belgorod region and leave with four left-flank divisions to the border: Zadelnoye, Tomarovka, Borisovka, st. Kazachek, to consolidate and cover the actions of 28 A from enemy attacks from the north and north-west.

28 As part of the 13th Guards, 244, 175, 227, 169, 300, 162 and 38th Rifle Division, 3rd Guards. kk (bibkgv. and 32 cd, 34 msbr); 6 Guards three more brigade; 764 ap PTO 651 more

427

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

one paw RGK; 7th Guards and 870 gap RGK; 594 and 266 popes of the RGK, 5th Guards, 51st and 233rd AAP of the 2nd type ... are deployed on the front of Titovka, Rubizhnoye, Khotomlya, Bogorodichnoye (75 km) with the following grouping of forces:

In the first echelon on the front Titovka, Oktyabrskoye (20 km) - 244th rifle division, 13th guards. and 162 sd with b guards. one more brigade, one paw of the RGK, 266 fathers of the RGK, 7 guards. and 870 gap RGK, 5 guards, 51 and 233 arm. ap of the 2nd type. In the second echelon in the districts of Malo-Mikhailovka, Baikov - 175 and 38 rifle divisions. In the third echelon in the area of Efremovka, Blagodatnaya, Reznikovo - 3 Guards. kk (5, b guards and 32 cd) with 34 msbr and one brig.

On the left flank, on the front of Oktyabrskoye, Rubezhnoye, Khotomlya, Bogorodichnoye (50 km), the 227th, 169th, and 300th Rifle Divisions are advancing with one tank brigade and 764 anti-tank artillery squadrons, 651 paws of the 594 gap RGK.

The tasks of the army: striking with the right flank, breaking through the enemy defenses, introducing the 3rd Guards into the breakthrough. kk with 34 motorized rifle brigade and one brigade, and by the end of the sixth day of the offensive, reach the front Tolokonnoye, Zhuravlevka, Liptsy, Nepokrytaya. Further, developing the offensive in the direction of Peresechnaya, by the end of the fourteenth day, reach the line: Repki, Peresechnaya, Kharkov, complete, together with 6 A, the encirclement of the Kharkov enemy grouping and continue to destroy it.

38 And in the composition of 199, 304, 337, 47 rifle divisions are deployed at the front: Bazelevka, Brigadirovka, Shurovka, Melovaya, Nizhne-Russky Bishkin (100 km), having 81 rifle divisions, with one tank brigade in the warm[ey] reserve in the Alekseevka area, Novo-Nikolaevka.

The tasks of the army: to firmly defend the occupied line and especially the directions of Chuguev, Kupyansk and Balakleya, Izyum. With the beginning of the offensive of the 28th and 6th armies, intensify the defense in order to the removal of opposing enemy forces.

6 A in the composition of 253, 266, 103, 411, 393, 270, 248 and 41 sd; 5 Guards three more brigade; 582, 59] ap PTO, one paw, seven gaps, one arm. ap of the 1st type of RGK and three arm. ap of the 2nd type of RGK; 2 kk (38, 62, 70 cd and one tbr), bkk (26, 28, 49 cd 7 tbr), 2 microns (two tbr) and Zmk (6, 130, 131 tbr, 23 msbr); the army is deployed on the front of Kiseli, Alekseevka, Novo-Vladimirovka, (suit.) Panyutino (65 km) in the following grouping: on the front of the main attack Kiseli, Grushino (20 km) in the first echelon deploy 253, 266, 103 and 411 sd four tbr, two ap ITO, five gap; three aap of the 2nd type of RGK. In the second echelon, in the area of x[utor] Kaminka, Mikhailovka, x[utor] Lyubitsky, deploy 248 and 41 rifle divisions. In the third echelon, in order to develop the success of the army offensive, concentrate: 2 microns in the Mikhailovka, Lozovenka,

428

Konstantin Bykov

Popovka, 3 microns - Novobunakovo, Razdolie, Novo-Ivanovka; 2 kk - Lozovsky, Dmitrievka, Krasnaya Balka; 6 kk - Krasnopavlovka, Knyazevo, Privolye.

For auxiliary operations and support from the 57th A of the Southern Fleet on the front x [morning] Timchenko, Novo Vladimirovka, (suit.) Panyutino (43 km), 393 and 270 rifle divisions are deployed with one paw, two gaps and one aap of the 1st type RGK.

The task of the army: inflicting the main blow on the right flank in the direction of Nov. Vodolaga, Merchik, break through the enemy's defenses, introduce mobile formations into the breakthrough and, by the end of the 6th day of the offensive, reach the line with rifle formations: Dudkovka, Vlasovka, Kokhanovka, Pokrovskoye and mobile formations at the line (not specified. — Ed.). In the future, together with 28 A, complete the encirclement of the enemy's Kharkov grouping, capture the Krasnograd area and, by the end of the 14th day, forward units of mobile formations and left-flank divisions gain a foothold on the Kolomak, Chutovo, Popovka, Skalonovka, Mazharovo, Pokrovskoye fronts.

4. In accordance with the actions of the troops, the grouping of the reserves of the fronts is established as follows: the field directorate of the Grechko operational group - vg. Raisin; 343 sd with one brigade - in the Aleksan-

firewood, Kunye, Zhovtnev; 124 rifle divisions with one brigade - in the area of Brigadirovka, Nikolaevka, Radkovka; 277th Rifle Division - in the Svatovo area; 130 MSBR - Starobelsk; 102 sbr - Rostov.

5. Management for the period April - May is established: the operational group of the YuZN - Svatovo,

headquarters of the SWF - Voronezh, VPU - Valuiki (with the beginning of the operation Headquarters of the SWF - Valuiki).

Headquarters of the Law Firm - Starobelsk; VPU - Rubizhnoye and Kamensk.

Chief of Staff of the South-Western Front, Lieutenant-General I. BAGRAMYAN Military Commissar of the South-Western Front Headquarters, Brigadier Commissar BORDOVSKII Deputy Chief of Staff of the South-Western Front, Colonel I. RUHLE

TsAMO, ff. 251, op. 646, d. 145, ll. 181 - 188. Published according to VIZh No. 12 - 1989

429

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

From the operational directive of the High Command of the South-Western Direction No. 00275 to the troops of the South-Western Front to conduct an operation with the task of encircling and destroying the Kharkov enemy grouping

April 28, 1942

1. The enemy, taking into account the line of defense he occupies, continues to accumulate operational reserves in the Kharkov region. Up to four PDs are observed in the areas of Akhtyrka, Kremenchug, Krasnograd, and Poltava. With the onset of dry weather, the enemy may attempt to eliminate the Barvenkovo-Lozovsky ledge and at the same time launch an offensive in the direction of Kharkov, Kupyansk in order to reach the main communications of our armies operating on the inner wings of the fronts of the SWN (38, 6, 57 and 9 A) .

2. On the right, 40 A of the Bryansk Front defends the line: Nov. Saviny, Stanovoe, Semitsa, covering the direction of Kursk, Voronezh ...

On the left 57 And the right flank of the Southern Front is being attacked by the enemy and is reaching the line: Sosi Petropol, x. Novo-Uplatnov, Krish-topovka. On the rest of the front, it defends the former line: Blagodatnoye, Novo-Kavkaz, covering the left wing of the Southwestern Front... |

3. In order to capture the Kharkov region, the Southwestern Front goes on the offensive with the task of breaking through the enemy's defenses and encircling and destroying his Kharkov grouping in the Kharkov, Zmiev, Balakleya, and Pechenegs regions with a concentric attack by the 6th and 28th armies. On the 15th - 18th day of the operation, go on the defensive at the line: Zolochiv, B. Tsapovka, Skovorodinovka, Staraya Vodolaga.

The readiness of the offensive for the outcome 4.5.42.

4.21 And consisting of 8 motor rifle divisions, 293, 297, 76, 301 and 227 rifle divisions, 1 motorized rifle brigade, 10 brigade, 8 brigades, 338 paws, 538 paws, 135 ap, 156 ap of the second type ... with three divisions to firmly hold the line : Spartak, Malo-Yablonovo, Shlyakhovo, Myasoedovo, Titovka, Gatishche No. 2. With two divisions with a tank brigade and reinforcement artillery, having the main forces south of Staritsa, go on the offensive from the front Plants 1st, Prilipka, vys. 163.2 with the task of breaking through the enemy defenses, capturing the Mur region, and by the end of the third day of the offensive, reach the Murom line, high. 219.5. In the future, advancing in the direction of Cheremoshnoye, go to the front Pristen, Nedostovka, Petrovka, high.

430

Konstantin Bykov

205.8 and, having entrenched, to secure the right flank of the 28th Army from enemy attacks from the north and northwest.

Army reserves - 1 MSBR - to concentrate in the area of Chuevo, Krivye Balki, Kholodnoe and 301 Rifle Division - in the area of Ivitsa, Protopopovka, Krasnaya Polyana. Shtarm - In short. VPU - Volchanskies Khutor, svh. KIM...

5. 28th Army consisting of 13th Guards, 244th, 175th, 169th, 162nd and 38th Rifle Divisions, 3rd Guards. kk (5, b guards and 32 cd, 34 msebr), 6 guards, 84, 90 and btbr, 764 ap anti-tank guns, 651 and 612 paws, 7 guards. and 870 gap, 594 and 266 dads, 5 guards and 233Zap of the second type RGK, | and 2/4 guards. mp, 110 ogvmdn - go on the offensive on the front of Izbitskoye, Fedorovka, break through the enemy defenses and, having captured the Ternovaya area, by the end of the third day of the offensive, reach the line: Vysoky, Veseloye, Petrovskoye, high. 219.1. In the future, rapidly developing a blow with the right flank in the direction of Borshchevoe, north[ero]-western] outskirts[aina] of Kharkov, by the end of the sixth day of the offensive, reach the front: Cherkasskoe-Lozovoe, Bolshaya Danilovka, x. Zaikin. After capturing the Liptsy area, withdraw one SD warm[ey] reserve to the area of Borisovka, Neskuchnoye, Sereda. Upon reaching the divisions of the first echelon at the Sereda-Veseloe line, introduce the 3rd Guards into the breakthrough. kk with the task to go to the Dementievka area, temporary warehouse. them. NKVD, Liptsy, High Yaruga and ensure the capture of the main forces of the army abroad: Cherkasskoye Lozovoe, Bolshaya Danilovka, x. Moth hawks. In the future, replacing the 3rd Guards. kk infantry, use it to strike around Kharkov in the direction of Dergachi, Gavrilovka.

Shtarm - Petropavlovka...

6. 38 A in the composition of 226, 300, 199, 304, 124 and 81 sd, 22 tk (36 and 13 tbr), 738 ap PTO, 468 and 507 paws, 574 gap, 51 and 648 ap of the second type RGK ... 3 / 5 and 3/4 Guards. mp, firmly holding the line of Bazaleevka, Bogodarovka, Borshchevoe, Olkhovotka, the main forces (four rifle divisions 22 tk) go on the offensive from the high front. 199.8, Art. Selyanin, Pyatnitskoye, Martovaya and, having struck in the direction of Molodove, Rogan, break through the enemy defenses in the Peschanoe, Bolshaya Babka sector and, by the end of the third day of the offensive, reach the Lebedinka line, high. 208.7, Zarozhnoe, Pyatnitskoe. Further, developing the offensive in the direction of Rogan, Ternovoye, part of the forces to seize the crossings in the Vvedenskoye, Chuguev sector and complete with units 6 A the encirclement of the Chuguev-Balakleya grouping of the enemy. Simultaneously, with the forces of two rifle divisions and two tank brigade, attack the city of Kharkov in cooperation

431

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

in contact with the 28th and 6th armies from the east. Shtarm - Kupyansk. VPU - Borschevoe (Northern)...

7.6 A in the composition of 253, 266, 103, 411, 47, 337, 248 and 41 sd, 5 guards, 37, 38 and 48 brigade, 21 tk (198, 199 and 64 tbr and 4 msbr), 23 tk (6 , 130, 131 tbr and 23 msbr), 582, 59] ap PTO, 8, 116, 375, 209, 399, 435, 269 dads, 3 guards. and 671 ap of the second type of RGK. 1 and 2/5 Guards. mp, 206 ogvmdn ... hiding behind two rifle divisions along the southern beret of the river. Seversky Donets, the main forces go on the offensive from the front Nizhne-Russian Bishkin, Alekseevka, high. 178.5, break through the enemy defenses and capture the areas of Berek, Efremovka, by the end of the fourth day of the offensive, reach the line: Zmiev, Taranovka, Kh. Vasilevsky, vys. 195.4, Berestovaya.

Later, advancing with the main forces in the direction of Merefa, Kharkov and 2-3 reinforced joint ventures from the Zmiev area to Krasnaya Polyana, by the end of the seventh day of the offensive, reach the line of Butovka, Kh. Trasnoy, Merefa, Rocket. With access to the indicated line, withdraw one SD warm[ey] reserve in the area of Ryabukhino, Knyazhnoy, Melekhovka. Upon reaching the divisions of the first echelon of the line of Berek, Efremovka, be ready to enter the mobile formations of the army into the breakthrough with the task of:

21 shopping mall, developing the strike of the first echelon, by the end of the fifth day of the offensive, capture the crossings across the river. Mzha and go to the area of Komarovka, Rakitnoye, h. Golubov, Ostroverkhovka, cut

roads linking Kharkov with the west. In the future, in cooperation with the infantry, attack Kharkov from the southwest and west.

23rd Corps, developing a first-echelon attack, by the end of the third day of the offensive, reach the area of Staraya Vodolaga, Karavanskoye, Stulepovka, Novaya Vodolaga and, depending on the situation, be ready to strike at Lyubotin or Valki, Kovyagi.

Shtarm - Fedorovka...

8. Bobkin's Armgroup consisting of 393, 270 rifle divisions, 6 cavalry corps (26, 28 and 49 cd, 7 brigade), 872 cap, 29 and 236 rgk rgk go on the offensive, push the enemy back to the west and by the end of the third day the main si - Lami rifle divisions to reach the line: Sofiyivka, Tarasovka, Veselaya, Yuryevka, Lukashevka. In the future, continuing the offensive, capture the Kegichevka, Sakhnovshchina area and reach the front by the end of the seventh day: 393rd Rifle Division - Kegichevka, Chervonoarmeysky, Dar Nadezhdy; 270 RD - Grishevka, Gladkovka, Andreevka, Lukashevka. With the release of units of the 393rd rifle division to the line of Dmitrovka, Mikhailovka, introduce 6 kk into the breakthrough with the task of striking in the direction of Cossack

432

Konstantin Bykov

Maidan and by the end of the fifth day of the offensive, capture the Krasnograd region. In the future, firmly holding the areas of Krasnograd, Petrovka, Kirillovka, to protect the left flank of 6 A from enemy attacks from the west. Shtarm - Petrovka. The headquarters of the armgroup - Krasnopavlovka (western) ...

9. Air forces of the front.

Army aviation:

21 A - 43 IAP, 135 BBP, 596 IBP (20 fighters, 15 night bombers and 12 day bombers).

28 A - RAG-4 (46 fighters, 20 attack aircraft, [7 bombers).

38 A - 164 and 182 IAP, 598 IBP (40 fighters, 14 night bombers).

6 A - 23, 296 and 18] IAP, 92 cap, 13 guards. bbp, 623 and 633 ibp (47 fighters, 12 attack aircraft, 14 day and 28 night bombers).

Armgruppa Bobkin - RAG-5.

Frontline aviation:

Ryazanov's group and Gorbatsevich's group (117 fighters, 60 attack aircraft, 20 day and 121 night bombers, 15 DB-3 aircraft).

Tasks of front-line aviation:

a) during the preparatory period of the operation, suppress enemy aircraft at airfields, prevent delivery to the Kharkov area from the areas of Belgorod, Gotnya, Akhtyrka, Poltava, Krasnograd; to cover the approach and concentration of the striking forces of the 28th and 6th armies, paying particular attention to covering mobile formations;

6) with the start of the offensive, be ready to involve all aviation forces for direct interaction with the strike groups of 28 lbA on the battlefield. Keep under supervision directions: Poltava, Kremenchug, Krasnograd, Dnepropetrovsk, Sinelnikovo;

c) destroy crossings across the river with systematic strikes. Dnieper Kremenchug and Dnepropetrovsk.

10. Front reserves:

277th rifle division - in the area of Novonikolaevka, Volosskaya Balakleyka, Blagodatnoye. Stadiv - Staroverovka. Prepare the line for defense: Arkadievka, Ivanovka, vys. 182.4, Volosskaya Balakleyka and be ready to launch a counterattack in the directions: Arkadievka, Pechenegy, Poltava, Balakleya. 343rd Rifle Division - in the area of Sukhoi Yar, Alexandrova, Kunye, Bugaevka. Stadiv - Bugaevka.

433

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Prepare for defense the line of Nurovo, vys. 191.0, Kunye, Krasnaya Polyana.

Be ready for a counterattack in the directions: Nurovo, Bogodarovka; Aleksandrovka, Balakleya; Kunie, Raisin.

2nd Cavalry Corps—in the area of Novobunakovo, Gorokhovka, Mirolyubovka, Privolye, Katerinovka, Krasnaya Balka. Shtakor - Gorokhovka.

Be ready to launch a counterattack in the directions: Lozovenka, Shebelinka; Knyazevo, Lozovaya; Mechebilovka, Barvenkovo.

11. Front headquarters from 2.5.42 - Valuyki. VPU - Svatovo.

Commander-in-Chief of the SWF Commander of the SWF

Marshal of the Soviet Union

S. TIMOSHENKO

Member of the Military Council of the SWN

N. KHRUSHCHEV

Chief of Staff of the SWNI SWF Lieutenant-General I. BAGRAMYAN ZNSh I. RUHLE

TsAMO, F. 251, op. 646, d. 145, ll. 189 - 196 (copy). Published according to VIZH No. 1 - 1990.

From the operational directive of the command of the Southern Front No. 00177 to the defense with the task of ensuring with its right wing the offensive of the troops of the South-Western Front in the Kharkov direction

b April 1942

1. The enemy continues to defend on the entire front, strengthening his grouping on the Red Army and Slavic-Kramatorsk directions by bringing in reinforcements from the depths and transferring part of the forces from the Taganrog and Makeevka directions.

Its reserves are in the districts of Pavlograd, Krasnoarmeyskoye, Kramatorskoye, Artemovsk, Makeevka, and Mariupol.

434

Konstantin Bykov

The approach of reserves from the depths on the Dnepropetrovsk-Zaporozhye line was noted.

Possible active actions of the enemy in the directions: Barvenkovsky, Lisichansk and Voroshilovgrad.

2. The armies of the front are firmly entrenched on the lines they occupy, providing with their right wing the offensive of the SWF troops in the Kharkov direction and covering the Voroshilov-grad and Rostov directions with their left wing.

Border on the right (lawsuit) Veshenskaya, Starobelsk, Izyum (point of common use with the South-Western Front), Vel. Kamyshevakh, Panyutino, Pavlovka. The border on the left is the same.

3.57 A in the composition of 99, 317, 150, 351 sd, 14 guards. sd, ottdb, 476 dads, 558 and 754 ap PTO with two separate] PTR battalions to defend the line of Tsaredarovka, Krishtopovka, Novo-Pavlovka, Mal. Razdol, replacing kutra 14.4 of the 270th rifle division and the Komkov group.

Strongly cover the Lozovaya area and provide a junction with the South-Western Front. Have one sd in the warm[ey] reserve in the Gemini area.

Shetarm - Bol. Andreevka. WPU - Gemini. The border on the left is Pervomayskoye, Studenok, (claim) Dolgenkaya, (claim) Barvenkovo, Bogdanovka, (claim) Novo-Bakhmetye-vo, Maryanka.

4.9 And in the composition of 341, 106, 216, 349, 335, 51, 333 rifle divisions, 78 battalions, 121 and 15 brigades, 4 guards, 437, 229 tap, 186 and 665 anti-tank artillery with two anti-tank rifle battalions to defend the Novo-Bakhmetyevo line, Gromovaya Balka, Novo-Yakov Levka, Kantemirovka, Krasnoarmeysk, Glubokaya Makatykha, Shchurovo, Brusovka. Strongly cover the Barvenkovo area and the directions of Izyum and Krasny Liman from Slavyansk. Provide joint 357 A.

One s or two brigade should be kept [in] the army reserve [in] the Barvenkovo area. In the future, withdraw one more rifle division to the army reserve in the Ivanovsky region. Shtarm - Mother of God. VPU - Privolye. The border on the left is the same...

11. Front reserves since 12.4:

a) 5kks 12 brigade [in] the district of Brazhovka, Kurulka, Golaya Dolina;

6) 255 sdi 2 brigade - Voroshilovgrad;

c) 347 sdi 4 guards. tbr - Rovenki, pos. them. Dzerzhinsky;

d) 102nd brigade - Rostov.

12. From all commanders of the armies and commanders of the SD I demand a solid defense, developed in depth, with a well-thought-out system of fire, anti-tank weapons, with

435

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

the maximum development of defensive structures and anti-aircraft defense obstacles and a wide adaptation to the defense of populated

POINTS. 13. Air Force:

1) systematic reconnaissance to the depth of the Dnieper River to reveal the enemy grouping and its reserves; 2) to prevent enemy regroupings; 3) inflict defeat on the enemy's concentrating reserves; 4) disrupt the work of railways] by destroying railways [road] nodes and hauls; 5) to destroy repair plants in Mariupol, Taganrog and Kramatorsk. 14. Front headquarters - Rubizhnaya, reserve command post - Starobelsk and Kamensk ... Commander of the Southern Front MALINOVSKII Member of the Military Council of the Southern Front KORNIETS Chief of Staff ANTONOV

Report of the High Command of the South-Western direction to the headquarters of the Supreme Command on the transition of the troops of the South-Western Front to the offensive in the Kharkov direction and considerations on the further conduct of hostilities

May 15, 1942

Fulfilling your instructions, after carefully and covertly conducted preparations, the armies of the Southwestern Front, on the morning of May 12, went on the offensive in the Kharkov direction. The transition of our troops to the offensive turned out to be sudden for the enemy. On the entire front, an offensive was planned and launched, our howl

436

Konstantin Bykov

On the very first day of the offensive, the scums managed to break through the heavily fortified lines and penetrate deeply into the enemy's disposition.

On the right wing of the front, our troops, advancing on Kharkov from the east, defeated units of the 79th, 294th, 297th, and 71st infantry divisions, inflicted significant losses on the 3rd and 23rd divisions of the enemy, and by the end of May 15 reached the front: Maslova Pristan, Murom, Dusty, Veseloye, Petrovskoye, Oktyabrsky, r. Grandmother.

The total width of the enemy defense penetration front reaches 50 km and the depth of our penetration is 18-25 km.

The left-flank armies of the front defeated a total of up to three [divisions] of the enemy and, successfully developing the offensive against Kharkov from the south and in the direction of Krasnograd, reached the front by the end of 15.5: x. Korobov, Bolshaya Gomolsha, Okhochee, Dyachkovka, Popovka, Kegichevka, Sakhnovshchina, Yurievka.

The total width of the enemy defense penetration front reaches 50 km and the depth of our penetration is 25-50 km.

On the eve of the offensive, the Air Forces of the front inflicted a number of surprise attacks on the enemy aircraft at the airfields of Kharkov, Krasnograd and Poltava and thus secured the initiative for action.

The successful penetration of the enemy's defenses on such a wide front (100 km) is explained mainly by the well-organized interaction of infantry with artillery, tanks and aviation on the battlefield.

To parry our attack on Kharkov from the east, the enemy advanced from Kharkov to the area of Chuguev, Zarozhnoye, Kamennaya Yaruga up to two tank divisions (over 400 tanks) and with a blow in the direction of Zarozhnoye, Peschanoe, Nepokrytaya pushed the strike force of the 38th Army back to the initial position and is currently trying to build on its success from the Nepokrytaya area to the flank and rear of the 28th Army. In two days of fierce fighting, the enemy tank divisions lost over 150 tanks. Our losses in tanks on this sector of the front are up to 100 units.

In other sectors of the front, our offensive does not meet with much resistance and develops successfully.

Judging by these data, we come to the conclusion that until now the enemy has not guessed the concept of our operation and directed his main shock fist at a secondary sector of the front.

437

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

and thus gave freedom of action to our strike groups.

It is now perfectly clear to us that the enemy, having concentrated in Kharkov] two full-blooded TDs, was probably preparing for an offensive in the direction of Kupyansk, and that we managed to thwart this offensive in the process of its preparation.

It is also obvious that at present the enemy in the Kharkov region does not have such forces at his disposal to launch a counter offensive against us.

Our actions in the Kharkov direction create very favorable conditions for the planned Golikov offensive (.

Assessing the current situation, we come to the conclusion that, despite the heavy damage we inflicted on the enemy tank group, the latter is a serious obstacle to the development of the offensive of the armies of the right wing of the front on Kharkov. Without a quick and decisive defeat of the main forces of the enemy's tank divisions, our operation may drag out in time, which will allow the enemy to increase resistance in the Kharkov direction by bringing in reserves.

To ensure the successful fulfillment of the main task of the front, we took all measures in our power.

We do not have enough tanks, aviation, and several rifle divisions to rout the tank groups and to supply the operation uninterruptedly. To complete the transaction successfully, please:

in the coming days, to allocate four tank brigades and two rifle divisions to reinforce the right wing of the front, and two rifle divisions for the left wing of the front;

oblige Golikov to go on the offensive.

Satisfy our requests for aviation, ammunition and fuel.

S. TIMOSHENKO I. BAGRAMYAN N. KHRUSHCHEV

TsAMO, f. 220, op. 226, d. 17, l. 1 - 6 (original). Published according to VIZH No. 1 - 1990.

' Lieutenant General F.I. Golikov - commander of the troops of the Bryansk Front.

438

Konstantin Bykov

Combat order of the headquarters of the South-Western direction No. 0140 / op to the commander of the Southern Front on measures to repel the enemy offensive, undertaken by him in the sector of the 9th Army

May 17, 1942 16.00

In order to repel the enemy offensive, undertaken in the sector of our 9th Army, the commander-in-chief ordered:

1. Transfer the 2nd cavalry corps (38th, 62nd, 70th cd) stationed in the area of Rozhdestvenskoye, Shatovo, Gorodnaya, Mechebilovka, Nadezhdovka to the operational subordination of the commander of the Law Firm. Shtakor - Novo-Mechebilovka.

2. To defeat the enemy group advancing on Barvenkovo from the south, organize and deliver a counterattack from dawn on 18.5 with the forces of 2 kki 14 guards. sd with reinforcements from the border of the river. Dry Torets (Barbalatovo, Ivanovka) to the flank and rear of the enemy group breaking through.

It is possible to move faster to the river. Sukhoy Torets separate detachments from the 2nd KK to hold the crossings in the section claim. Barvenkovo, Ivanovka. At the same time, the rifle regiment of the 333rd Rifle Division with reinforcements firmly held Barvenkovo behind it, preventing enemy tanks and motorized infantry from breaking through to the north.

3. Destruction of the enemy group advancing from the Slovyansk region against the left flank of the 9th Army, to organize the forces of 5 CC, 12 and 121 Tank Brigade and 333 Rifle Division (without one joint venture).

4. Have at least one cd in the reserve of the front commander in the Barvenkovo area.

At the same time, immediately begin the transfer to the Barvenkovo region of one SD AND ONE TBR from the 37th Army.

5. The reserve of the commander-in-chief - the 343rd rifle division, the PTR battalion and the 92nd reconnaissance brigade, should be concentrated by order of the South-Western Front in the Izyum region, a suitable and knowledgeable line of defense: Semenovka, Mal. Kamysa, take ma mziva, Seniceno. divisions to be ready for

"Na.am counterattack z in the directions of Barvenkovo and Slavyansk: 54} 16 by means of airborne reinforcements with access to the area

439

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Raisins subordinate to the commander of the Law Firm. Use - with the permission of the commander-in-chief.

6. Commander of the LF to take measures to prevent the spread of the enemy to the northern] bank of the river. Seversky Donets at the junction between 78 sbri 51 sd. |

7. Reinforce the actions of the strike groups of the 9th Army with two regiments of the GMCH.

8. Receipt of this order and the plan of counterattacks to convey.

Chief of Staff of the SWN, Lieutenant General I. BAGRAMYAN Military Commissar of the Headquarters of the SWN, Brigadier Commissar 3. IVANCHENKO Head of the Operations Department, Major General VETOSHNIKOV

TsAMO, f. 220, op. 226, d. 17, l. 8 - 10 (original). Published according to VIZH No. 1 - 1990.

Report of the High Command of the South-Western Direction to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command about the enemy going on the offensive against the 9th Army of the Southern Front and measures to strengthen the right wing of this front

May 17, 1942 17.30

Bid. Supreme Commander Comrade Stalin.

At dawn on May 17, the enemy went over to the offensive against both flanks of the 9th Army of the Southern Front. The probable goal of the enemy's action is to capture the area of Barvenkovo, Izyum and try to thwart our attack on Kharkov from the south.

The first blow of the enemy, delivered with the support of aviation and more than 100-120 tanks, units of the 9th Army did not withstand, and by 10.00 in the morning the enemy managed to wedge into our position at a depth of 5-8 km in certain sectors of the front.

To repel the enemy offensive and its subsequent defeat, in addition to the measures set out in our combat disposition

Konstantin Bykov

order No. 0140 / OP, we allocated to strengthen the right wing of the Southern Front from the tanks arriving at our disposal: T-34 - 57 and T-60 - 23 units, a total of 80 tanks.

Taking into account the exceptional importance of maintaining a strong position of the troops of the right wing of the Southern Front to ensure our offensive on Kharkov, we ask you to allocate two rifle divisions, two tank brigades, one air division consisting of two IAP and two regiments of Il -2, direct them now to the Izyum region.

GIMOSHENKO BAGHRAMYAN KHRUSHCHEV

TsAMO, d. 220, op. 226, d. 17, l. 11 - 11 v. (script). Published according to VIZH No. 1 - 1990.

Combat report of the command of the South-Western Front No. 0119 to the headquarters of the Supreme High Command on the combat operations of the troops of the front for May 18, 1942

May 19, 1942 00.30

Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. Comrade Stalin.

1. Troops of the South-Western Front from the morning of 18.5 continued the offensive, encountering strong resistance from the enemy, who turned into counterattacks in separate sectors of the front.

The enemy counterattacked by infantry, tanks and the increased influence of aviation held back the advance of our units. The tank units and motorized infantry of the enemy, which broke through in the sector of the 9th Army of the Southern Front, reached Izyum and threatened the messages of the 6th Army.

2. The 21st Army - with the right flank defended the previously occupied lines, with the left flank from 12.00 18.5 went on the offensive and, having met strong fire resistance and an enemy counterattack with a force of up to 1000 with a group of tanks, fought on the previously occupied line.

In battle in the area of high. 214.6 8 enemy tanks were knocked out.

3. 28th Army - defends the occupied line with the right flank,

441

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

left flank in the morning 18.5 went on the offensive and by the end of the day was fighting at the turn: eastern slopes high. 205.4, eastern slopes high. (3 km west [behind] Peremoga-northern [northern]), groves 2 km east [more] high. 214.3, high. 194.5, Martynovka.

Enemy aviation by groups of aircraft during the day repeatedly carried out raids on the battle formations of army units.

4. The 38th Army - from the morning of 18.5, having gone on the offensive, the right flank fought at the turn: the eastern slopes of high. 199.0, 172.0, "K" (1 km southeast [more precisely] Peschanoe), unnamed height. 2 km east [exactly] height. 203.1, elev. 196.3, northern] part of Bolshaya Babka. The left flank defended the previously occupied lines.

The enemy from the area of Nepokrytaya, Peschanoe, a grove southwest of Peschanoe offered stubborn fire resistance to the advancing units.

5. The 6th Army - in the afternoon of 18.5 went on the offensive and by the end of the day, repelling the resistance of the enemy, fought at the line: northern [aina] [aina] [Gaidary, elev. 173.2, 126.8, x. Firefighter, St. Red Giant, southern suburbs | Ryabukhino, eastern outskirts [aina] Knyazhnoye, Stulepovka. 23 TC was withdrawn from the battle by the main forces and is on the move to Nechebilovka.

The enemy put up stubborn resistance to the advancing units with strong antitank defenses, counterattacks, and air force.

6. The group of Major General Bobkin continued the battle for Krasnograd on the right flank, and defended on the rest of the front at the previously reached lines.

7. Air Force of the front during 18.5 made 322 sorties.

As a result of aviation actions, up to 20 tanks, 26 vehicles, 6 carts with cargo and 8 enemy guns were destroyed and knocked out.

In air battles, 7 enemy aircraft were shot down. Our losses: 3 aircraft did not return to their airfields.

S. TIMOSHENKO I. BAGRAMYAN N. KHRUSHCHEV

TsAMO, f 229, op, 161. file 842, l. 243 - 245 (original). Published according to VIZH No. 1 - 1990.

442

Konstantin Bykov

Report of a member of the Military Council of the South-Western Direction to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command on the combat operations of the troops of the Direction for May 18, 1942:

Moscow. Comrade STALIN. May 19, 1942 02.00

SOUTHWESTERN FRONT

The troops of the South-Western Front continued the offensive from the morning of 18.5, encountering strong resistance from the enemy, who went over to counterattacks in some areas.

The enemy, having planted reserves, counterattacked by infantry and tanks and the impact of aviation, held back the advance of our units.

The 21st Army defended the occupied lines on the right flank, went on the offensive on the left flank, encountering strong fire resistance and a counterattack up to an infantry regiment with a group of enemy tanks, fought on the occupied line.

8 tanks were destroyed in the battle.

The 28th Army's left flank went on the offensive. During the day, enemy aviation repeatedly carried out raids on the battle formations of army units.

The 38th Army's right flank went on the offensive. During the day the army made little progress. The left flank occupied the former line.

The 6th Army went on the offensive in the afternoon and by the end of the day captured the Krasny Gigant state farm, Stulepovka. The army repelled infantry counterattacks supported by enemy tanks.

Bobkin's group on the right flank continued the battle for Krasnograd. The 7th tank brigade cut the Krasnograd-Poltava road. In other areas at the same boundary.

The Air Force of the front made 322 sorties. Up to 150 infantrymen were dispersed and partially destroyed. Disabled 20 tanks. Broken: vehicles - 24, supply - 7, military guns - 8. One echelon (50 wagons) was set on fire on the railway line Kharkiv - Dergachi.

7 enemy planes were shot down in air battles.

443

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht SOUTHERN FRONT

The enemy in front of the 9th Army in the morning of 18.5 continued the offensive in two directions: 1) the Barvenkovo direction - by the forces of the 1st Mountain Rifle Division, the 100th Infantry Division and the 14th Panzer Division (up to 70 tanks) pushed the 9th Army to the north. By 11:00 am, the enemy captured Barvenkovo [m] with infantry and tanks (30-40) and advanced units reached the Ilyichevka state farm (7 km northeast of Barvenkovo); 2) in the Slavyansk-Izyum direction - with the forces of the 101st Infantry Division with 50 tanks (16th Panzer Division) [at] 14.30, a group of machine gunners and individual tanks captured the southern part of Izyum [a] (on the right bank of the Seversky River Donets), Shpakovka, Semyonovka, and continued the offensive by separate groups of tanks with submachine gunners in a northwestern direction towards Vel. Kamyshevskhu (20 km from Izyum).

Parts of the 9th Army fought throughout the day on the northwestern outskirts of Barvenkovo.

According to reconnaissance aviation, on the morning of 18.5 there was a movement of up to 200 tanks and 200 vehicles from the Andreevka area to Barvenkovo.

Enemy aircraft numbering up to 50 aircraft in the sector of the 9th Army on the night and in the morning of 18.5 bombed the crossing over the river. Seversky Donets, roads to crossings and communication lines in the area of Izyum[a].

Parts of the 9th Army are retreating with battles in an organized manner to new lines.

Transmitted by HF on behalf of Comrade Khrushchev Gapochka!

TsAMO, f. 28, op. 11627. file 1162, l. 14 - 16 (typewritten copy). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

Recording of direct wire conversations between the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General A. M. Vasilevsky and the High Command of the South-West Direction

May 19, 1942 15.35

The apparatus of Timoshenko, Khrushchev. Hello. At the apparatus Vasilevsky. Hello, I'm listening.

'Gapochka P.N. - Regimental commissar for special assignments under a member of the military council of the South-Western direction.

444

Konstantin Bykov

Timoshenko, Khrushchev. On the morning of May 19, due to a sharp deterioration in the situation on the front of the 9th Army of the Southern Front and the rapid advance (spread) of the enemy in the general direction towards Izyum, numbering five infantry divisions and two tank divisions (14th and 16th) with the presence of a grouping of reserves in the area of Stalino, Kramatorskaya (according to intelligence data), where 13 TD were taken into account, we decided, without delaying time, to take everything that was possible, proceeding from our possibilities.

1. On the Zmiev-Staroverovka front, we decide to leave three rifle divisions, two tank brigades and four reinforcement artillery regiments. Leave the Bobkin group in full force within the occupied borders, bearing in mind, after occupying Krasnograd, the main forces of the cavalry corps and the tank brigade should be withdrawn to the reserve [and placed] at the junction of the Bobkin group and the three troops left at the Gorodnyansky front.
sd.

2. The command of these troops is entrusted to lieutenant-general comrade. Kostenko, I will subordinate Bobkin's administration for this.

3. Take over and subordinate the farms of Pushkin and Kuzmin!, which have already entered the area known to you, to the 6th Army Administration headed by Gorodnyansky, and there also to subordinate the three rifle divisions, two tank brigade, withdrawn from the 6th army, 5 kk, remaining in the Gorodnyansky area, and 106 sd of the 9th army, which is subordinate to 5 kk. Thus, Gorodnyansky will have four rifle divisions, seven tank brigade, one motorized brigade and six reinforcement artillery regiments. Tov. Podlas to subdue 2 KK, which is in our reserve, one brigade from the 6th Army and 341 SD9th

army, retreated to the left flank of Podlas. Create a grouping on the left flank of Podlas for an auxiliary strike to the right of Gorodnyansky.

4. On the Senicheno-Studenok sector near Malinovsky, as part of the 9th Army, 6 rifle divisions, 4 brigade and 30 cd from the 5 cc are assembled. This group, acting to the left of Gorodnyansky, will deliver an auxiliary blow.

5. Tov. We decided to subordinate Podlas to ourselves, since the management and mainly the material support of his Malinovsky

GP ushkin E.G. - Major General of Tank Troops, commander of the 23rd TC. Kuzmin E.I. - Major General of Tank Troops, Commander of the 21st Tank Corps.

)

445

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

is not possible, since all this will follow the path of Gorodnyansky.

6. Concentrate your two rifle divisions and two brigade arriving on the Volokhov Yar-Balakleya direction, where we have already concentrated one brigade. This group is scheduled for a strike to the west in cooperation with pressure on the enemy 38 A on Rubezhnoye-Chuguevi of the Kostenko group from Zmiev on the crossings of the bunks. Seversky Donets. At the Ryabyshev and Moskalenko section, continue the fulfillment of the previously set task. Kostenko's group to defend on the line reached by the end of today. With all the forces and means to fall upon the southern enemy grouping and defeat it. With a blow from Krupyansk [a] in the direction of Volokhov Yar - Andreevka - Zmiev, bring the left wing of the 38th Army to the line of the river. Seversky Donets, joining the flank of the Kostenko group in the Zmiev area. This will release up to five rifle divisions and three armored brigade for Kostenko's group in the direction of Merefa. We ask you to immediately report our decision and ask you to approve it. We have begun development, a detailed plan will be presented later. The answer is needed immediately to give orders to the troops. We have everything.

VASILEVSKY. How do you plan to implement this decision in time?

Timoshenko, Khrushchev. Now it is very difficult to say, because a lot depends on the actions of the enemy, perhaps the battles will be imposed on Pushkin and Kuzmin today, but tentatively, if the situation allows us, then the beginning by the end of 21.5 or the morning of 22.5. All.

VASILEVSKY. When are you thinking of starting the derivation of Gorodnyansky?

Timoshenko, Khrushchev. Everything depends on your decision, the situation requires a conclusion immediately.

VASILEVSKY. Okay, now I'm going to report. Incidentally, the question you raised was already discussed at the Headquarters this morning. I leave the wire behind me and I will give an answer on it after the report. All.

TsAMO, F. 229. op. 161, d. 809a.l. 528 - 530 (telegraph tape). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

446

Konstantin Bykov

Recording of direct wire conversations between the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General A. M. Vasilevsky and the High Command of the South-West Direction

May 19, 1942 15.50 Timoshenko's apparatus, Khrushchev. At the apparatus Vasilevsky.

VASILEVSKY. The Headquarters has approved your decision and proposes to proceed immediately with its implementation. Please send the developed plan in code. All. Goodbye.

Timoshenko, Khrushchev. Everything is clear, let's get started. The plan will be presented in code. Goodbye.

TsAMO, f. 28. op. 11627. file 950. sheet 159. Telegraph tape. Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990

Combat order of the High Command of the South-Western Direction No. 00320 to the commander of the 6th Army, Lieutenant General A. M. Gorodnyansky and the commander of the army group, Lieutenant General F. Ya. Kostenko, to conduct military operations in order to defeat the enemy in the Izyum direction

May 19, 1942 19.00

1. The enemy, holding back the offensive of the armies of the South-Western Front in the Kharkov direction, went on the offensive in the Izyum direction with the forces of five infantry divisions and two infantry divisions and is trying to get out of the rear and communications of the 57th and 6th armies.

2. In order to defeat this enemy grouping and ensure the further development of the offensive on Kharkov

I ORDER:

Kostenko's army group consisting of 253, 41, 266, 393 and 270 rifle divisions, 57 and 48 tank brigade, 6 kk, four anti-tank RGK and two anti-tank artillery units from the morning of 20.5 go on the defensive at the reached line and, firmly holding it, provide 6- th and 57th armies from attacks from the Kharkov, Krasnograd and Pavlograd directions. Main forces 6 kk (two kd, two

447

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

brigade) withdraw to the reserve armgroups in the area of Efremovka, Shlyakhovaya, Nizh. Aurel, in readiness for a counterattack in the indicated directions. Allocate a strong detachment to capture the Zmiev area and capture the crossings on the river [(ekah | Seversky] | Donets, Cheremushnaya.

The boundary line on the right is x. Korobov, Upper Bishkin, (claim) Kiseli.

On the left from 57A - the former.

For control, subdue the headquarters of the Bobkin group and part of the headquarters of 6 A, without violating the control of 253; 266 and 41 sd.

6 And in the composition of 337, 47, 103, 248 and 411 rifle divisions, 21 and 23 shopping malls, 37 tank brigade and six ap RGK, continuing to hold crossings on the river with parts of 23 shopping mall. Berekai 337 and 47 sd - the southern bank of the river. Seversky Donets, covertly deploy by morning 21.5 at the turn of Bol. Andreevka, Petrovskaya the main forces of the army and, inflicting

the main blow by the right flank in the direction of Novo-Dmitrovka, to defeat the enemy's Barvenkovskaya grouping in cooperation with 9 and 57 A.

To the right of 57 A, with three rifle divisions, 2 rifle regiments and one tank brigade from the Novo-Prigozhay front, Fedorovka strikes around Barvenkov from the south.

The boundary line with it is the Chervony Spire, Barvenkovo, (claim) Ocheretino.

To the left of 9 A, holding back the enemy at the river crossings. Seversky Donets at the mouth of the river. Berek, Izyum strikes from the Studenok area in the direction of Kurulka 1st.

The boundary line with it is Starodolsk, Izyum, the mouth of the river. Bereka, Barabashevka.

To the north of the 6th Army, Sherstyuk's group, consisting of four rifle divisions and three tank brigade, went on the offensive in the morning of 22.5 in the direction of Volokhov Yar, Chuguev.

The boundary line with it - r. Seversky Donets.

4. The material support of the Kostenko group is assigned to 6A. Bear in mind that the 57th Army will be transported and evacuated in the 6A lane.

Commander-in-Chief of the SWF Commander of the SWF Marshal of the Soviet Union S. TIMOSHENKO Member of the Military Council of the SWF and SWF N. KHRUSHCHEV Chief of Staff of the SWF and SWF Lieutenant General I. BAGRAMYAN

TsAMO, f. 220, op. 226. D. 17, ll. 22 - 24 (original). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

448

Konstantin Bykov

Combat order of the High Command of the South-Western Direction No. 0143 / op by the commander of the troops of the Southern Front and the 57th Army for an offensive with the task of encircling and destroying the Barvenkovskaya enemy grouping

May 19, 1942 19.00

The enemy, holding back the offensive of the armies of the South [th] -W [western] front in the Kharkov direction, went on the offensive in the Izyum direction with the forces of five infantry divisions and two infantry divisions and is trying to get out of the rear and communications of the 57th and 6th armies.

In order to defeat this enemy grouping and ensure the further development of the offensive on Kharkov, I order:

57th Army consisting of 150, 99, 351, 317, 341 sd, 14 tv. sd, one joint venture 333 sd, 2nd cavalry corps [a] (62, 38 and 70 cd), 38 brigade, three reinforcement artillery regiments, firmly holding the occupied line, prepare a strike with the forces of at least three sd, 2 kk (three artillery regiments), three reinforcement artillery regiments and one brigade from the line of Novo-Prigozhaya, Fedorovka, bypassing Barvenkovo from the south in the general direction to Vik NINO.

Task: in cooperation with the 6th and 9th armies, encircle and destroy the enemy's Barvenkovskaya grouping. In the future, keep in mind parts of the shock group to go to the river. Samara at the front of Nikolskoye, Bezzabotovka, Ocheretino.

Readiness for the offensive since the morning of May 21, 1942

From 12.00 on May 20, 1942, the 57th Army passes under my control.

To the right - Lieutenant-General Kostenko's army group, having subjugated General Bobkin's group, from the morning of 20.5.42 goes on the defensive at the reached line and firmly holds it, providing strikes by the 6th and 57th armies from the Kharkov and Krasnograd direction.

The border with it is the same.

To the left, the 6th Army since the morning of 21.5.42 [is] in readiness to go on the offensive from the Bol. Andreevka, Petrovskaya for delivering the main blow by the right flank in the general direction of Novo-Dmitrovka.

15 The last triumph of the Wehrmacht 449

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

The border with it is a lawsuit. Heart Spire, claim. Barvenkovo, Viknino, Ocheretino.

Organize material support through the crossings and the zone of operations of the 6th Army from the bases and means of the Southern Front.

Commander of the SWN Troops Marshal of the Soviet Union TIMOSHENKO Member of the Military Council of the SWN KHRUSHCHEV Chief of Staff of the SWN Lieutenant-General BAGRAMYAN

TsAMO, f. 220. op. 226. d. 17, ll. 27 - 29 (original). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

Combat report of the High Command of the South-Western direction No. 00323 / op to the headquarters of the Supreme High Command on the offensive operations of the troops of the direction from May 12, 1942, the situation by the morning of May 21, 1942 and the plan for further actions

May 21, 1942 19.00

The offensive of the armies of the South [th] -W [western] front [of] Kharkov coincided in time with the impending major offensive of the Germans in the Chuguyev-Izyum and Barvenkovsky directions.

Our attack on Kharkov from the northeast forced the enemy to abandon the offensive in the direction of Chuguev and Izyum and turn their main forces—tank formations and aircraft—against the right wing of the front.

The offensive of the 6th Army of the South [go]-W [western] Front on Kharkov from the south developed successfully, but since the 9th Army of the South [Southern] Front could not repel the enemy's attack in the Barvenkovsky direction, the enemy managed to get out to the deep rear of the 6th and 57th armies, and we had to suspend the offensive of this army on Kharkov and, in the conditions of an unfinished regrouping, enter the river. Berek and R. Britai into an oncoming battle with large enemy mechanized formations (two or three TDs), developing a blow from Barvenkovo to the northwest. |

By the morning of 21.5 the situation appears as follows:

1. Parts of the 21st, 28th and 38th armies are on the occupied lines

450

Konstantin Bykov

precise battles, repelling frequent enemy tank attacks with the support of powerful aircraft.

On the morning of 21.5, a concentration of enemy troops was established in the Balakliya area.

2. Heavily battered units of the 9th Army, retreat beyond the river. Seversky] Donets, defending its northern coast on the front Protopopovka, Izyum, Studenok. °

The army crossed the river with part of its forces and captured the bridgeheads at Izyum and Studenok in readiness to expand these bridgeheads.

3. The 57th Army repulsed on 20.5 on the entire occupied front an offensive by five or six enemy infantry divisions.

On the left flank, 120-150 tanks were attacked and forced by hastily scattered groups of 2 kki 14 guards. sd depart for the river. Brittany to the Star front. Gemini, Annunciation, Rozhdestvenskoe.

The army has the task of attacking to the north-northeast, with the assistance of the 6th army, to reach a connection with it.

4. The 6th Army with the main forces - 21st and 23th TK, 103rd and 248th Rifle Divisions - Kutru 21.5 is deployed at the turn of Krasnopavlovka, r. Bereka and conducts an offensive to the east with its left flank in order to clear the areas of Protopopovka, Volvenkovo, Maryevka, Petrovskoye from the enemy. The rest of the forces approach.

5. Armgroup KOSTENKO, subjected to frequent counterattacks, held the occupied lines, with the task of withdrawing to the Terinovka, Efremovka, r. Orel, Ligovka, Merry.

6. The air forces of the front are directing their main efforts to the destruction of enemy tanks and motorized infantry in the areas of Petrovskaya, Grushevakh, Mechebilovka and northeast of Lozovaya.

7. At the same time, we are preparing a strike from the east against the Chuguev Balakleyevsky grouping of the enemy with the forces of the brought reserves.

Approximately the beginning of the offensive in the morning 23.5.

S. TIMOSHENKO N. KHRUSHCHEV I. BAGRAMYAN

TsAMO, f. 229. op. 161, d. 809a, ll. 521 - 524 (original). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

451

(10667 - SE JIA op vogehiyodi) < iti "9ss 'to "055 `Fi 0\$ 'and 'Eph 't '605 'to `6 ss `F 18 0T "EU" n: se - ss `0ss - 815 `69T - 99T "ii `608 `P '9f9 `by 'T6s`F'OIUP |

einezhAa -l0 3 IShepop mechone' /\$0 [0 echnnchietoo 'hechoge' 966 \$1 - 'iidotiddat yogeda ionneechahee en en echnonnodohee 'echliod ezhmet e 'chechogei \$ [\$ 9f nechodiAcheche 'echnnchgood and echnene4 19nevopgyaya iepopg ch4etop hishoo oneii Ya "

959 [5 81 MP 659 5506 | ESSAY 69] m.

IIIOE 991205 4 EISH

- vpoha en 'itoer

ss Aa "ee. from

—— GG and I am achnnen achnnney Choh eih> iYa 818 550 ROU \$ 9ÿ 05 969 09 -ECeCheh i-sil-s 'iii@ev bi- / s enichho0CH ZUS SE bu 596 (6 SS ZU PACH! milestones -de'viae k-9 iepepon | yachoteionii zogemolyae | chocolnia „IENOY ITOV AND VINNY 90) id this] ideyup id ide1l id

1 SreT vei TE op 013 iinogaebien iokhzechoyachdEKH en 1200 POIFEI EE winegaebien alongene \$- o10] heioya hebeton o kinegez)

452

Konstantin Bykov

Description of the combat operations of the 1st German Panzer Army in the spring of 1942

Not earlier than November 5, 1942.¹

... January 28, 1 TA conducted combat operations in the area of the breakthrough and at the front along the river. Mius is already in the capacity of von Kleist's army group.

The defensive lines were held in fierce battles with heavy losses. The supply of now two armies, often with interruptions, was provided along the only road Dnepropetrovsk - Stalino.

The newly replenished divisions had to wait until May for a counteroffensive. It was planned to encircle and destroy the Russians with strikes directly to the west of the Donets: by the army group from the south and by the 6th army from the north.

However, the 6th Army was forced to abandon its plan, because a few days before the start of the offensive, Russian tank units struck at Kharkov, and thus pinned down the 6th Army.

A favorable situation developed for the army group, since the Russians concentrated their main efforts in the attack on Kharkov and thereby weakened their front in the zone of the army group. Therefore, the goal of the offensive was not only to dismember the enemy, but also to divert his forces from the 6th Army.

On May 17, the army group went on the offensive. Already on the second day of the unit [7 A and 3 TC, the enemy was thrown back on the right flank to Izyum.

On the fourth day, the offensive, which was successfully developing in the western direction, was suspended in order to divert the enemy forces from 11 AA, and a daring decision was made, the most important for the outcome of the battle: to deploy mobile formations of 3 TK to the north, connect with 6 AA and thus destroy large forces enemy in the area south of Kharkov.

On the sixth day of hostilities, May 22, after the regrouping of the 14th and 16th TDs, advancing northwest of the Donets bend, with

Dating is done by content.

453

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

united with 6 A in the Balakleya area, and 60 mpdi | GPD at the same time completed the encirclement of the enemy. 6 A pursued the enemy, retreating to the east as a result of a successful encirclement.

Now already 11 shots, during the course of a successful offensive, it was possible to push the enemy back to the north. The Russians, of course, concentrated all their forces to break through the narrow corridor of the 3rd shopping mall. On May 24, as a result of the continuous offensive of the formations of 6 A and the von Kleist army group, the Red troops were squeezed in the territory of 48x27 km. Only a few units of the enemy managed to break out of the encirclement with fierce battles and avoid complete annihilation.

On May 26, the army reported the destruction of the main forces of the Reds. During the spring battle near Kharkov, the most combat-ready shock grouping of the Southwestern Red Front was defeated. The main prerequisite for summer operations has been created.

The Commander-in-Chief of the GA, Field Marshal von Bock, noted the successes of the army in a special order. Special recognition of the success of the command and formations of mobile troops, who contributed

The main contribution to the success of the operation was the assignment by the Fuhrer of the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross to the commander of the 3rd Corps, General von Mackensen.

One only | The TA took 137,355 prisoners and captured or destroyed 50 tanks, 641 guns, 195 anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, and 15 aircraft. In total, 22 rifle divisions, 7 cdi, 15 brigade were defeated.

The von Kleist Army Group and the 6th Army took 215,000 prisoners and also captured or destroyed 1,812 guns and 1,270 tanks. 542 aircraft shot down.

During all this time, the troops of the Miussky front and the eastern front of 17 A, weakened in the interests of the offensive, unshakably held their lines and thus also made a significant contribution to the destruction of the enemy in the pocket south of Kharkov.

TsAMO, op. 12479. file 1188. ll. 5 - 7 (translated from him). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

454

Konstantin Bykov

From the report of the High Command of the South-Western Direction to the Headquarters of the Supreme Command on the results of the May operation of the South-Western Front and the armies of the right wing of the Southern Front for the period from May 12 to 30, 1942

Not earlier than May 30, 1942. !

Bid. Supreme Commander-in-Chief Comrade STALIN.

...UT. The main reasons for the defeat

1. The well-conceived and organized attack on Kharkov turned out to be not fully secured against enemy attacks in the Barvenkovo direction.

The weakening of the combat strength and the violation of the planned combat formation of the defense of the 9th Army, caused by the battles for Mayaki and the reduction of its composition by one rifle division (216th rifle division), made it impossible for this army to create a defense in depth with sufficient reserves capable of preventing front breakthrough.

On the very first day of the offensive, the defenses of the 9th Army, stretched almost in one line, were relatively easily broken through by enemy tank formations. As a result of this, units of the 6th and 57th armies and the Bobkin group quickly found themselves cut off from their bases and found themselves in encirclement conditions.

The defeat of the 9th Army was largely the result of the failure of the command of this army to control troops in difficult battle conditions. The reconnaissance of all types of the 9th Army and the Southern Front did not reveal the impending strike in a timely manner and thus deprived the command of the opportunity to take additional measures to repel the enemy's attack on the 9th Army.

2. It was obvious that without turning the bulk of the tank formations of the 6th Army to the east, the impending catastrophe could not be avoided. Timely measures were not taken to immediately turn the 21st and 23rd tank corps to the east towards the enemy tank formations, which were striving to capture the crossings across the river. Seversky] Donets on the site of Savintsy, Petrovskaya. Instead of hitting the enemy massively at once, at first

The document has no date. Dating is done by content.

455

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

only one 23 tk was turned, then with a delay of one day - 21 tks 248 sd.

3. The command of the armies and part of the commanders of corps and divisions with their headquarters proved to be incapable of leading troops in difficult battle conditions. As a rule, the leading command staff of armies, corps, and divisions at crucial moments in operations and battles did not lead formations of troops, but traveled around the subdivisions. This happened in the group of General Kostenko and the 6th Army during the period of semi-encirclement and encirclement, when the army commander left for one division, a member of the Military Council for another, and the chief of staff for a third.

Approximately the same order was followed by the command of the corps AND DIVISIONS.

Thus, the centralized control of entire units was lost and the intended actions were frustrated. It should be taken into account that all this happened at the most tense moment of the situation, when it was necessary to make every effort to aim army units to get out of the encirclement and organize interaction between the branches of the troops on the battlefield.

Such self-withdrawal from the leadership of the armies as a whole finally led to the loss of command and control of the troops and gave rise to spontaneity in combat operations on the battlefield. This is one of the main reasons for the defeat of the 9th and 57th armies.

4. A major role in the defeat of our troops in this operation was played by enemy aircraft, which from the second day of our offensive gained air supremacy and inflicted defeat, chained to the ground and deprived them of maneuver on the battlefield by continuous strikes by a large number of aircraft on the troops.

Particularly convincing were the actions of enemy aircraft against our troops, who were surrounded. Continuous air attacks by the enemy made it extremely difficult to regroup troops for an attack to the east, disrupted command and control, and, upsetting battle formations, disrupted the actions of troops on leaving the ok

ruzheniya. Front Air Force, despite the desire to massage their actions

456

Konstantin Bykov

vii in the most important directions, nevertheless, due to the significant quantitative superiority of enemy aircraft, they did not provide the actions of their troops ...

Commander-in-Chief of the SWN Troops

Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. TIMOSHENKO Member of the Military Council of the YuZN A. S. KHRUSHCHEV
Chief of Staff of the YuZN

Lieutenant General Y. Kh. BAGRAMYAN

TsAMO, F. 251, op. 646, d. 145, ll. 238, 266 - 269 (copy). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

From the report of the command of the Southern Front to the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Colonel-General A. M. Vasilevsky and in a copy to the Commander-in-Chief of the South-Western Direction Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. Timoshenko about the enemy breaking through the defensive zone of the 9th Army of the Southern Front on May 17 - 20, 1942 G.

Giyunya 1942

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE ARMIES OF THE SOUTHERN FRONT

Upon a personal call from the Military Council of the Front (Lieutenant General Malinovsky, members of the Military Council Comrade Korniyets, Major General Vershinin and Chief of Staff of the Front, General

lieutenant Antonov) to the commander-in-chief of the YuZN marshal comrade. Timoshenko on April 6, 1942, an order was received from the Commander-in-Chief: the Southern Front to firmly gain a foothold on the occupied lines, providing with its right wing the offensive of the SWF troops in the Kharkov direction and with its left wing firmly covering the Voroshilovgrad and Rostov directions.

From 14.4, a new demarcation line was established between the SWF and the SF, according to which the right flank of the SF stretched to Tseredarovka (7km west of Lozovaya).

At the expense of the right wing of the Southern Front, eight reinforcement artillery regiments, three tank brigade, one brigade, and one brigade commander-in-chief were allocated to reinforce the South-Western Front.

457

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

On the personal instructions of the chief of staff of the SWN, Lieutenant General Bagramyan, in the 57th and 9th A, it was necessary to leave nine rifle divisions and create strong reserves in the Voroshilovgrad direction.

GROUPING THE ARMIES OF THE RIGHT WING AND RESERVES OF THE FRONT

In accordance with the task set, a regrouping was carried out according to the directive of the front No. 00177 of 6.4, and to cover the Izyum-Barvenkovskaya direction, twelve rifle divisions and one battalion were left in the composition of the 57th and 9th armies.

57A consisting of 99, 317, 150, 351 sd, 14 guards. sd, otb, 476 taps, 558 and 754 paws with two battalions of anti-tank rifles had the task of defending the line of Tseredarovka, Krishtopovka, Novo-Pavlovka, Mal. Razdol, allocating one SD to the army reserve.

The total width of the front of the army is 30 km, the average density per sd is 16-20 km.

By this time, the strength of the divisions was on average from 6 thousand to 7 thousand people.

9A consisting of 341, 106, 216, 349, 335, 51, 333 sd, 78 sbr, 121, 15 brigade, 4 guards. tats, 437, 229 tap, 186 and 685 paws with two battalions of PTR had the task of defending the line of Novo-Bakhmetyevo, Gromovaya Balka, Novo-Yakovlevka, Kantemirovka, Krasnoarmeysk, Glubokaya Makatykha, Shchurovo, Brusovka, firmly covering the Barvenkovo area and directions to Izyum and Krasny Liman from Slavyansk. Have one rifle division and two brigade in the army reserve in the Barvenkovo area. In the future, withdraw one more SD to the army reserve in the Ivanovsky district.

The total width of the front of the army is 90 km, the average density per sd is 15-18 km.

By this time, the strength of the divisions was on average from 5 thousand to 6 thousand people [ovek]).

Front reserves:

5 kks 12 brigade - in the area of Brazhovka, Kurulka, Naked Valley; 255 sdi 2 brigade - Voroshilovgrad; 347 sd and 4 guards. tbr - Rovenki.

All army commanders and sd commanders were required to create a solid defense, developed in depth, with a well-thought-out anti-tank fire system, with the maximum development of defensive structures, anti-tank and anti-personnel obstacles and wide adaptation to the defense of settlements.

458

Konstantin Bykov

By 17.4 in 9A, 216th Rifle Division was withdrawn to the army reserve in the area east of Barvenkovo. By this time, by order of the Headquarters of the 15th Guards. sd from 18 A was sent to the Moscow Military District for

deploying it into the body. As a result of this, in 18A on the front of 80 km there were only three detachments of incomplete strength. 255 sd, withdrawn to the Voroshilovgrad [a] region, was not yet fully staffed and included 5424 people [ovekd]. It was necessary to immediately strengthen 18A in order to achieve a solid support for the Voroshilovgrad direction. To this end, 216th Rifle Division was transferred from 9A to reinforce 18A... F

TsAMO, f. 251. op. 646, d. 189, ll. 2 - 4, 23 (original). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

A directive letter from I. V. Stalin to the Military Council of the Southwestern Front with an assessment of the front command on the results of the Kharkov operation and on the further tasks of the front troops

June 26, 1942

We here in Moscow, members of the Defense Committee and people from the General Staff, have decided to remove Comrade V. Bagramyan. Tov. Bagramyan does not satisfy the Headquarters not only as chief of staff, called upon to strengthen communication and leadership of the armies, but does not satisfy the Headquarters even as a simple informant, who is obliged to honestly and truthfully report to the Headquarters on the situation at the front. Moreover, t: Bagramyan turned out to be unable to learn a lesson from the catastrophe that broke out on the Southwestern Front. For any three weeks Southwest

459

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Thanks to its frivolity, the front front not only lost the half won Kharkov operation, but still managed to give the enemy 18-20 divisions.

This is a catastrophe which, in its disastrous results, is tantamount to the catastrophe with Rennenkampf and Samsonov in East Prussia. After everything that happened Comrade. Bagramyan could, if he wanted to, learn a lesson and learn something. Unfortunately, this is not yet visible. Now, as before the catastrophe, the communication of the headquarters with the armies remains unsatisfactory, the information is of poor quality, orders are given to the armies with a delay, the withdrawal of units also occurs with a delay, as a result of which our regiments and divisions are surrounded now in the same way as two weeks ago.

I think this should be ended. True, you are very sympathetic and highly appreciate Comrade Bagramyan. I think, however, that you are mistaken here, as well as in many other things.

We are sending to you temporarily as Chief of Staff Deputy Chief of the General Staff Comrade. Bodin, who knows your front and can be of great service.

Tov. Bagramyan is appointed Chief of Staff of the 28th Army. If Comrade. Bagramyan will show himself well as the chief of staff of the army, then I will raise the question of giving him the opportunity to move on later.

It is clear that the point here is not only Comrade. Bagramyans. We are also talking about the mistakes of all members of the Military Council, and above all Comrade. Timoshenko and comrade. Khrushchev. If we told the country in full about that catastrophe - with the loss of 18 - 20 divisions, which the front survived and continues to experience, then I'm afraid that you would be treated very harshly. Therefore, you must take into account the mistakes you have made and take all measures to ensure that they do not occur in the future.

had places.

The main task of the front today is to firmly hold the eastern bank of the river in its hands. Oskol and the northern bank of the river. [Seversky] Donets, hold on to something

no matter what the cost. For the integrity and safety of all our positions on the eastern bank of the Oskol, on the northern bank of the [Seversky] Donets and in other sectors of the front, all of you, members of the Military Council, will answer with your head.

We decided to help you and give you six fighter brigades (without divisional directorates), one tank corps,

460

Konstantin Bykov

two regiments of RS, several regiments of anti-tank artillery, 800 anti-tank rifles.

We cannot give rifle divisions, since we are not ready for battle.

I wish you success. I. STALIN

TsAMO, f. 3, op. 11556, d. 8, l. 212 - 214 (copy). Published according to VIZh No. 2 - 1990.

Order on personal registration of irretrievable losses on the fronts

No. 0270 April 12, 1942

A large number of letters to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and to the People's Commissariat of Defense from citizens inquiring about the fate of their close relatives on the fronts indicates that personnel records, in particular losses records, are completely unsatisfactory in the army.

Many military units do not send the prescribed notices to the relatives of the dead, and the headquarters of the formations do not send the names of the dead to the Center in a timely manner.

This circumstance causes fair complaints on the part of the population about the failure to receive exhaustive answers to inquiries. For the same reason, the assignment of pensions to the families of the victims is being delayed.

As a result of untimely and incomplete submission of lists of losses by military units, there was a large discrepancy between the data of numerical and personal accounting of losses. At present, no more than one third of the actual number of those killed is on a personal record. The personal records of the missing and captured are even more far from the TRUTH.

All this speaks for the fact that the staffs of the armies and fronts have not established proper control over the recording and presentation of this information.

In order to streamline the personal accounting of irrevocable

461

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

losses on the fronts, in pursuance of clause 5 of the Decree of the State Defense Committee dated March 11, 1942 No. 1424s -

I order:

1. To the commanders of regiments and other separate units, within 15 days, send notices to relatives and district military commissariats about all those killed and dead, about whom notices have not yet been sent. :

In the future, send: notifications about the dead and dead - as soon as the order is given to exclude the unit from the lists, and about the missing and captured - after one month from the date of exclusion from the lists of the unit.

2. Army headquarters, within 15 days, collect from the headquarters of formations and individual units of army subordination names lists for all those killed, dead, missing and taken prisoner, on which the lists have not yet been submitted to the Center, and send them by courier to the Central Bureau of Accounting for Losses on the Fronts of the Glavupraform (Moscow, Frunze st., 19).

3. The army headquarters should strictly monitor the timeliness of the submission by the headquarters of formations of nominal lists of irretrievable losses to the Central Bureau, and the Military Councils of the armies should report the results of the check to the Main Directorate for the Formation and Manning of Troops by telegraph every month on the 25th.

4. By way of amendment to Art. 12 of the Regulations on personal accounting of losses to establish that nominal lists of irretrievable losses (killed, dead, missing and captured) are submitted by regimental headquarters to division headquarters every 5 days and are attached to the report of the regiment headquarters on losses (form No. 8 "Gabels of reports ").

5. The military councils of the fronts report to me on the implementation of this order for a report to the People's Commissar of Defense Comrade Stalin by May 10, 1942.

6. Order to transfer to the Military Councils of the fronts and armies by telegraph.

Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Army Commissar 1st Rank E. SCHADENKO!

f.4, op. 11, d. 70, l. 98 - 99 (original).

Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR June 22, 1941 - 1942.T. 13 (2-2). — M.: TERRA, 1997. Doc. No. 166. - S. 201.

462

Konstantin Bykov Order on the procedure for issuing vodka to the troops of the army

No. 0373 May 12, 1942

1. I declare for the exact and steady implementation of the Decree of the State Defense Committee No. GOKO-1727s dated May 11, 1942 "On the procedure for issuing vodka to the troops of the army in the field" (in the appendix).

2. I make the Military Councils of fronts and armies, commanders of formations and units responsible for the correct appointment and distribution of vodka for the allowance of servicemen in accordance with the announced Decree of the State Defense Committee.

3. Order and Resolution of the GOKO to be put into effect by telegraph.

4. Order NCO No. 0320 of 1941 to cancel.

Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Lieutenant-General of the Quartermaster Service KHRULEV

DECISION OF THE STATE DEFENSE COMMITTEE No. GOKO 1227y DATED MAY 11, 1942 MOSCOW, KREMLIN. ON THE PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF VODKA TO THE TROOPS OF THE SERVICE ARMY

1. Stop from May 15, 1942, the mass daily issuance of vodka to the personnel of the troops of the army in the field.

2. Keep the daily issuance of vodka only to servicemen of the front line units who have success in combat operations against the German invaders, increasing the rate of issue of vodka to servicemen of these units up to 200 gr. per person per day.

For this purpose, to allocate vodka monthly to the command of the fronts and individual armies in the amount of 20% of the number of troops of the front - the army, located on the front line.

3. To all other servicemen of the front line, the issuance of 100 gr. of vodka. per person to produce on the following revolutionary and public holidays:

on the days of the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution - November 7 and 8, on the day of the Constitution - December 5, on the day

463

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

New Year's Day - January 1, Red Army Day - February 23, International Workers' Day - May 1 and 2, All-Union Athlete's Day - July 19, All-Union Aviation Day - August 16 and International Youth Day - 6 September, and also on the day of the regimental holiday (formation of the unit).

4. Decree of the State Defense Committee No. 562c of August 22, 1941 to cancel.

Chairman of the State Defense Committee I. STALIN! f. 4, op. 11, d. 70, l. 548 - 549 (original).

Order on the publication of newspapers on the South-Western, Southern and Bryansk fronts in Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Kazakh languages

L# 0379 May 13, 1942

1. In order to strengthen propaganda among non-Russian fighters, organize the publication of Red Army newspapers in the national languages:

at the political departments of the Southwestern and Southern fronts - in Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani;

at the political administration of the Bryansk Front - in Georgian, Azerbaijani and Kazakh languages.

Newspapers to be published under the name of a front-line newspaper twice a week, with a circulation of up to 5,000 copies due to the circulation of a front-line newspaper. |

2. Introduce the following positions of servicemen in the editorial staff of front-line newspapers:

a) Southwestern, Southern and Bryansk fronts

Deputy newspaper editor

in Georgian 1

Translator from Russian to Georgian 2

Revision proofreader of a Georgian newspaper 1

Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR June 22, 1941 - 1942, vol. 13 (2 - 2). — M.: TERRA, 1997. Doc. No. 188. - S. 228.

464

Konstantin Bykov

Typesetter in Georgian 2

Deputy editor for Azeri newspaper | Translator from Russian into Azeri 2 Auditing proofreader of Azeri newspaper 1 Typesetter in Azeri 2

6) Southwestern and Southern fronts

Deputy editor for newspaper in Armenian | Translator from Russian into Armenian 2 Armenian newspaper revision proofreader 1 Armenian typesetter 2

c) Bryansk Front

Deputy editor for a newspaper in the Kazakh language 1 Translator from Russian into Kazakh 2 Revision proofreader of the Kazakh newspaper 1 Typewriter in the Kazakh language 2

Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Army Commissar 1st Rank E. SCHADENKO!

f. 4, op. 11, d. 70, l. 563 - 564 (original).

Supreme Command Headquarters Directive No. 170395 to the Military Councils of Fronts and Armies on the use of radio equipment for command and control of troops

May 18, 1942 18h 00min

The practice of warfare has shown that conventional wired means of communication for troop control in modern combat are insufficient and unreliable. As a rule, the operation of wired communication facilities is disrupted by enemy aircraft on the very first day of combat; radio means are not used by the command and staffs. So,

Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR June 22, 1941 - 1942.T. 13 (2-2). — M.: TERRA, 1997. Doc. No. 189. - S. 229.

465

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

On May 17, 1942, when the enemy went on the offensive, the headquarters of the Southern Front had no connection with the headquarters of the 9th Army, and the headquarters of the 9th Army, which lost contact with its troops at the beginning of the battle, has not restored it to this day. since.

The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command several times pointed out and points out again and demands from the Military Councils of the fronts and armies the use of radio facilities for communication in full measure, the resolute suppression of radio fear, considering radio facilities the main means of communication and under the personal responsibility of the Military Councils to prevent such moments when the front with its armies and the army with its troops did not have radio communication.

The Military Council of the Southern Front should immediately restore communication between the command of the 9th Army and the troops and report to the Headquarters about the reasons and culprits for the lack of radio communication between the front headquarters with the army and the army with the troops.

On behalf of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command and. O. Chief of the General Staff A. VASILEVSKY

TsAMO. F. 9ba. Op. 1711. D. 7a. L. 54 (original).

Published according to: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Stavka VGK: Documents and materials: 1942. T. 16 (5-2).
- M.: TERRA, 1996. Document No. 285.

Order of the headquarters of the Supreme Command No. 00107 on the underestimation of radio communications in ensuring uninterrupted command and control of troops

May 30, 1942

Despite the repeated demands of the Headquarters to improve the use of radio communications to ensure uninterrupted command and control of troops using radio, the experience of recent battles (Crimean, Southern and Southwestern fronts) shows that:

Radio communication, which is the main and very often the only means of communication and command and control of troops in the conditions of modern

466

Konstantin Bykov

war, is used extremely poorly and is ignored by most commanders and staffs.

The radio stations at the disposal of the headquarters of the fronts and armies are often not used even in the absence of a wire connection, the radio stations lag behind the headquarters, are separated from the command, do not have operational workers and coders with them.

Army commanders and division commanders do not care that they always have radio stations with which they can control the troops and inform the higher headquarters about their actions. Moreover, many army commanders and division commanders, for fear of discovering the location of their headquarters, forbid the operation of radio stations.

These reasons, as a rule, lead to disruption of communication with the highest headquarters and loss of command and control.

Noting the completely unacceptable attitude towards the use of radio communications on the part of the Military Councils of fronts and armies, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command orders:

1. Military councils of fronts and armies:

a) resolutely put an end to the underestimation of radio communications and, regardless of the situation, ensure uninterrupted command and control of troops and uninterrupted radio communications with higher headquarters;

6) at the main command posts, and when moving - in the columns of headquarters, have at least two radio stations of the RAF or RSB type for communication with the highest headquarters and control of their troops;

c) Responsibility for continuous communication with the highest headquarters and systematic information by radio about one's actions should be placed personally on the chiefs of staff of the fronts and armies;

d) assign to radio stations working with the highest headquarters, starting from the division headquarters, a permanent operational worker and at least two coders who are obliged to be at the radio stations without interruption and ensure the processing of incoming combat documents on the spot. The names of the operational headquarters commanders attached to the radio stations should

467

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

be known to the highest headquarters with which the given radio station works;

e) to service the radio stations working with the highest headquarters, to allocate the best radio operators of the 1st class.

2. In order to ensure stable communication between the commanders of the armies and the highest headquarters, in cases of failure of car radios and the impossibility of replacing them with others, to the head of the Main Directorate of Communications of the Red Army: |

a) before 06/15/1942, allocate at the personal disposal of each army commander two portable radio stations of the "North" type to communicate with the headquarters of the fronts, and within the armies - to communicate with divisions, organize additional radio communications using radio stations RB; ,

6) to serve the indicated radio stations, select two highly qualified radio operators and one middle commander, who will be included in the staff of the field administrations of the armies.

By order of the Military Councils of the armies, two experienced and proven coders should be assigned to the indicated radio stations.

3. Upon receipt of this order, the Military Councils of the armies should allocate special vehicles for the transportation of radio stations of the Sever type, radio operators and coders, so that the specified group of radio operators and coders is with the commander during all his movements.

The order to put [into action] by telegraph. Deliver execution. .

Headquarters of the Supreme High Command I. STALIN A. VASILEVSKY

TsAMO. F. 132a. Op. 2642. D. 32. L. 103, 104 (certified copy). Published according to: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Stavka VGK;: Documents and materials: 1942. T. 16(5-2). - M.: TERRA, 1996. Document No. 311.

468

Konstantin Bykov

Headquarters Directive No. 170439 to the Military Council of the South-Western direction on the report of the reasons for the failure in the operation in the Kharkov direction

b June 1942 21h 15 min

The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command expects you to urgently submit a report on the reasons for the failure of the operation in the Kharkov direction with a detailed presentation of the conclusions on it.

On behalf of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command A. VASILEVSKY

TsAMO. F. 48a. Op. 3408. D.71. L. 363 (original).

Published according to: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Stavka VGK: Documents and materials: 1942. T. 16(5-2). - M.: TERRA, 1996. Document No. 328.

Literature

Agtaa Kotapa sha! 4oPega7bo1 topd a]. E4yiga MepFape. Visogebn, 1995.

Vepagu Afet. Gle BegSpeg Vagep-P/u!1\$1op. OSezsysTe 4er 257. sashchepe-PO!1\$1op 1939 - 1945. Waya Nap\$-Nepshe Rod7lp, Vaa Maipeit, 1957.

Pe 71. sashchepe-O!gm\$1yuop pp Imeyep UeShKpeg 1939 - 1945. Sees5 - ipa Eyebi15BeisShe ai\$ dep Katreep 4er "Slaskrayep P/1\1510p" wop Uegaip 61\$ UchaPpegaa, ut Moshe Suzzsho M5 tit R /

aCepgee.

ROKEGEV. 7eyvesssme (MetsaiYaage 2006 4ez Viswez 4er Agbets\$getetzsvay "Daz YuMeee ai", Nldesveit, 1973).

Olepsy Yoeape. Katrezs\ladeg 51 "E4de\le1\$5". Yeshe SBgogiK a\ \$ RokKiteshchep ipa VepsSchep. 1937 - 1945. Moyugfisv UePav Eyigats, 1991.

Ogagap KuayuYus. OasKo-amombranska ler ca genus 33a\pegadot. Apgie \$ Sesages. Gazgei, 1979.

De. Ilrapa l'ycheq. So teep - ZlaNpegad - Mipsweq. Obetsebep \ag Vagip\$ sr: vogrezerep. Ze b\$ uepaya, 2004.

Sessshsche 4eg 3.Rapteg-P\1510p. Wet-Bran4epbige 1935-1945. WayYar 4er

Vispvapami Sashcheg V1sShMeg. Vet, 1967.

S1apk Rama M. KPagKow 1942. Apayut oga Mishchagu Obazeg. Zagredop KoskuUshe Sepbe. MU (RibPzne4 t She Opcead 51zhe\$ Bu Zagredop, 1998, Bu Rama M. Clan {"}).

STapk Bama M. AChaz apa Zogueu. TVe So\meE KvagKou OyEpayaue, 12-29 Mau 1942 (Oa\ma Slap Prodisb, 1998).

stat; Co/: Ge 14. Rap?er-P/u1\$1jup 1940 - 1945. Negaizrerefep 1m

470

Konstantin Bykov

Apigar eg Triopzretetsvay 4er 14. Rapzer-P01U15101. - \Uepar Napz-Neppisre Roatap. Waa MaiVei, 1957.

gap; Kan. OezsysShe 4et 384. shashchepe-O!mz1op 1942 - 1944. - Kolyu, 1965.

Gapg Siem. Seygrareg. Pe 1. Sebirza11ya1yut 1935 - 1945. - UePae Nap\$-Nepshe Rodtop. Wad Maipeit, 1954.

Re {Agti| Moga Ropes, March 17, 1941 - March 4, 1942, E4yiga Eipa. Siy. (co1. Rete Osh, co]. ye/an Ba/ [asan, co]. Aezapagi Eshi, co]. Sieoteye Tisa, stag. Auge] Reshee5si, stag. Lra Kolagi, co]. De Siy5xtis-O[aru. Tpe sparet Note \shsy [(gap \$ | w {ea Fe tzhepa! uaz mtoe Bu

co]. Syeotye Tisa) Kotape, Visigezi, 1999. Togpai Obegcheitate, Kitom5K Egaph. ZigtaiShepe. Her] sh aeg Vgapdip?. MahipShap-Uepaz. NeTsoga ap4 Vopi, 1965.

I'ogape Y'etyep. Cessasche 4et 16. Rapteg-Omzon 1939 - 1945. Negaisoezefen vot Kategadzsvayz\$Bipa 16. Rapteg-ip@ shashepe-P/u1\$10p. Kategadept IB me!K e.U. Ue[aye Nap\$. Neppshe Roa7tyap. Wad Mumveit. Veith 1958.

Rapzag\$lage{ y1A SragKow. Gep 12-29 Ma] 1942. Akshepa M! ZzyusQuo [ie. 1942.

Adam V. Catastrophe on the Volga. - Smolensk: Rusich, 2001. Beevor E. Stalingrad. - Smolensk.: Rusich, 1999. Derr G. Campaign to Stalingrad. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1957.

From the Bug to the Caucasus: Per. with him. - M.: AST Publishing House LLC: Tranzitkniga LLC, 2004. Contents: [X Army Corps in the Eastern Campaign of 1941 / G. Geyer. From the Bug to the Caucasus: III Panzer Corps in the campaign against Soviet Russia in 1941-1942 / E. von Mackensen.

Carell Paul. Road to Nowhere: The Wehrmacht and the Eastern Front. - Smolensk: Rusich, 2003.

Crusade against Russia: Collection of articles. - M.: Yauza, 2005 / Editor-compiler M. Chernov.

Müller-Gillebranod B. Land Army of Germany. 1933 - 1945 - M.: "Izographus", 2002.

471

The last triumph of the Wehrmacht

Bagramyan I.L. So we went to victory. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1977. Vasilevsky A.M. The work of a lifetime. - M.: Politizdat, 1974. Military history magazine. - 1987. - No. 10. Military history magazine. - 1989. - No. 12. Military history magazine. - 1990. - No. 1. Military history magazine. - 1990. - No. 2.

Military German-Russian Dictionary. Comp. A.M. Taube, edition

°
third. — M.: OGIZ, 1942.

Gorbatov A.V. Years and wars. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1965.

Grechko A.A. War years. - M.: Military Publishing, 1976.

Zablotsky A., Larintsev R. In the sight of Junkers-87. Losses of dive bombers Junkers-87 on the Soviet-German front in 1941-1943. Directory. — Severodvinsk, 2007

Ivanov S.P. Army headquarters, front-line headquarters. - M.: Military Publishing, 1990.

Kachur V.P., Nikolsky V.V. Under the banner of the Sivash. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1989.

Galushko Andrei, Kolomiets Maxim. Front illustration. Battles for Kharkov in May 1942. - 2000. - No. 6.

Maydanik L. I. In the Kharkov cauldron / New Russian Word (New York). - 1995. - 19.05, 26.05.

Moskalenko K.S. On the Southwest direction. 1941 - 1943. Memoirs of the commander. Book 1. - M.: Nauka, 1973.

Naumenko Yu.A. Move, infantry! - M., 1989.

Nebolsin D. Twice junior lieutenant. Website "Forgotten Regiment".

Liberation of cities: A guide to the liberation of cities during the Great Patriotic War 1941 - 1945 / M.L. Dudarenko, Yu.G. Perechnev, V.T. Eliseev and others - M.: Military Publishing House, 1985.

Rodimtsev A.I. Yours, Motherland, sons! - K., 1962.

Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR on June 22, 1941] - 1942 V.13 (2-2). — M.: TERRA, 1997.

472

Konstantin Bykov

Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Stavka VGK: Documents and materials: 1942. T. 16 (5 - 2). — M.: TERRA, 1996.

Ryabyshev D.I. First year of the war. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1990. Samchuk I.A. Thirteenth Guards. - M., 1962. Safronov I. V. Behind the front is also a front. - M., 1986.

Soviet Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1968.

Soviet tank troops 1941 - 1945. Military history essay. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1973.

Stalingrad epic. Materials of the NKVD of the USSR and military censorship from the Central Archive of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (compiled by Zhadobin A.T., Markovchin V.V., Sigachev Yu.V.). — M.: Belfry, 2000.

Chernyavsky K.I. Always with the fighters. - M., 1979. Shunkov V.N. Wehrmacht weapons. - Minsk: Harvest, 1999.

CONTENT

Foreword her comment 5 SWEDEN, 1942: THE FIRST BOOK ABOUT THE KHARKOV BATTLE 16 71st
.. INFANTRY DIVISION her nnnnn. 37 3rd TANK DIVISION her
ehnnnn. 107 51st BOMBING SQUADRA "EDELWEISS" 190 244th DIVISION OF ASSAULT
GUNS 209 6th ROMANIAN ARMY CORPS 216 14 -I TANK DIVISION ying nn, 235 16th TANK
..... DIVISION ny nnnn 243 299 369th CROATIAN REINFORCED INFANTRY REGIMENT
310 384th INFANTRY DIVISION. en yinn. 351 257th INFANTRY DIVISION and nnn. 361
Appendix yee yen yin 382

Literature eeee eeee nin me 470

Popular science edition

SOLDIER OF THE THIRD REICH

Konstantin Bykov THE LAST TRIUMPH OF THE WEhrmacht Kharkiv "cauldron"

Published in the author's edition Managing editor G. Pernavsky Art editor /1. Volkov Technical editor V. Kulagina
Computer proofing G. Klochkova Proofreader A. Vasina

LLC "Yauza-press" 109439, Moscow, Volgogradsky pr-t, 120, bldg. 2.

Signed for publication on 03.06.2009. Format 84x108 1/32. Headset "Newton". Offset printing. paper gas.
Conv. oven I. 25.2. Circulation 3000 copies. Order No. 3954

Printed from the finished files of the customer at OAO IPK Ulyanovsk Printing House. 432980, Ulyanovsk,
st. Goncharova, 14

SERGEANT

Independent military history magazine published quarterly since 1996

The magazine is aimed at a wide audience, and it presents all areas of military knowledge: the course of battles and campaigns; description of weapons, weapons and military equipment; history of military and departmental structures; development of uniforms, equipment and symbols; biographies of monarchs and military leaders. In addition to the main articles, thematic series are published: "Russian military uniform", "Phaleristics", "Vexillology", "Military symbols of Russia", "States and dynasties" and many others, as well as private announcements, information about military reconstruction clubs, reviews and reviews of new military history books and films.

\$ Anglo-Saxon `army of the king - Harold V in 1066

, 23 Commandant's Office of the Armed Forces of the USSR and RF in 1967-2006

-

Marines ° Rossim from Peter: ' _ to Catherine , 4725-1762. —

And —

| Yu)

i | The subscription to the magazine "Serzhant" is accepted at any post office according to the Unified catalog "Press of Russia" (catalogue with a green cover), subscription index 43042.

Editorial office coordinates: 119526, Moscow, Vernadsky Ave., 89, 315. (495) 434-46-25
\$egdeapt@ospeYogi

[=

More than 170 thousand dead and prisoners, 27 defeated divisions and 15 tank brigades, the collapse of the entire Southwestern Front and the German breakthrough to Stalingrad and the Caucasus - this is the terrible result of the Kharkov disaster of 1942, one of the greatest defeats of the Red Army and the last him the triumph of the Wehrmacht.

How could this happen? Why did the successfully launched Soviet offensive end in a monstrous defeat and colossal losses? Why, according to Stalin, did the Red Army "lose an operation that was half won"? How did the Wehrmacht manage to turn the tide of the Battle of Kharkov in their favor? Based primarily on German operational documents and presenting for the first time a German point of view, this book answers many of these questions.

According to the author, the Kharkov "cauldron" became "the most unjustified, most offensive defeat of the Red Army in the entire history of the Great Patriotic War. However, this was the last encirclement battle won by our enemies!